

Uncle Jim's Stories *from the* OLD TESTAMENT



A
Book
of

Bible Stories for Children



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Frontispiece

UNCLE JIM'S STORIES
FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT

BY
HARTWELL JAMES

ILLUSTRATED

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR
IN UNIFORM STYLE

The Boys of the Bible
Uncle Jim's Bible Stories
Uncle Jim's Stories from
the New Testament

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UNCLE JIM'S STORIES
FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT

Uncle Jim's Stories from the Old Testament

BETTY GETS A SURPRISE

“**B**ETTY DEAR, I have a happy surprise for you,” said Mrs. Burroughs as Betty came dashing into the house in response to her mother’s call.

“A — a surprise!” stammered Betty, flinging back her yellow curls, and opening her blue eyes inquiringly.

“Yes,” answered her mother smiling happily. “Can you guess what it is?”

“I know! It’s Daddy! Daddy’s coming home,” cried the little girl excitedly.

“No, dear; Daddy is at sea in the big ship that he commands,” replied Mrs. Burroughs a little wistfully. “He is not expected home for at least another month.”

The joy reflected in Betty Burroughs’ eyes

BETTY GETS A SURPRISE

quickly faded, giving place to a single tear-drop that slowly trickled down one cheek. Betty bravely brushed the tear away and awaited her mother's further words.

"I am sorry, dear. I, too, wish that it might be Daddy who is coming. Next to Daddy, whom of all persons in the world would you rather see?"

"Let me see. I think — I think I should like to see Uncle Jim, my Daddy's own brother," decided Betty after a moment's reflection. "Yes, I am sure of it. It is Uncle Jim! I know it now," she cried. "Oh, goodie, goodie! How wonderful!" Betty clapped her hands and danced joyously about the room, then threw impulsive arms about her mother's neck. "Don't tell me it isn't true, Mother dear," she begged. "You know I don't like to be disappointed, and —"

"Yes, it is your Uncle Jim Burroughs who is coming to see us. He will be here to-morrow morning, and with him your Cousin Dick with whom you had such a happy visit last summer. I have a letter from Uncle Jim in reply to my invitation to him to come and spend as long a time as possible with us. He writes that, if we can stand noisy Dick and himself that long, they may stay with us for a whole month."

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"Won't that be glorious!" breathed Betty.

"Indeed it will, and, perhaps by then, Daddy may have returned from his voyage."

"Oh, Mother, you are telling me so many wonderful things that it makes my head all topsy-turvy," bubbled the little girl, her face flushed and eyes sparkling. "Do you think that Uncle Jim will tell us more of those wonderful Bible stories, too?" she questioned eagerly.

Mrs. Burroughs said she did not know, but thought he might if Betty really wished him to do so.

"The last time he was here you and Dick enjoyed Uncle Jim's Bible Stories so much, and they made you both so eager to attend Sunday-school, that I am sure he will be willing to tell you any others that he may know," answered Mrs. Burroughs smilingly.

Betty Burroughs was now nine years old, and since her father, whom she worshiped, was at sea all the time, save for the few days that he could now and then spend at home when his ship was in port, the little girl's life was somewhat lonely. True, she had playmates, but none could fill the place in her life occupied by the big, bronzed man, who, in his blue uniform, resplendent with gold braid, and possessing a voice deep

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and thrilling as the seas that he sailed, was to her the much-loved hero of her childhood.

With the thought of what was before her, Betty was excited and flushed all the rest of the day. She helped her mother put the house in order, or thought she did, chattering incessantly, but when night came she found herself too tired to lie awake and think about the happy days just ahead of her.

In Betty Burroughs' dreams that night, Daddy, Uncle Jim and Dick were all mixed up, as she expressed it later, and her first conscious moment after going to bed was when she was awakened by the sun shining in her eyes, and the sound of voices belowstairs. The little girl sat up rubbing her eyes and wondering who was making so much noise in the parlor. All at once Betty recollected, and was out of bed with a bound. A few moments later she was downstairs embracing Uncle Jim and shaking hands with Cousin Dick, who, in one short year, had grown into a big, handsome boy. Dick was so big and so much like a man that, at first, Betty was a little shy of him. As the day wore on, however, and she realized that it was the same fun-loving Dick, her shyness left her, and in their play after breakfast Betty forgot all about Uncle Jim

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and the stories that she had hoped he might tell her.

In the meantime Uncle Jim and Mrs. Burroughs had spent the day talking, principally about the children.

It was not until that evening after supper that Betty all of a sudden remembered what she had been looking forward to — more wonderful stories of the Bible from Uncle Jim. She asked him very sweetly to tell them some.

“More stories?” answered Uncle Jim quizzically. “Why, I thought you were tired of hearing my stories. I am quite certain that Dick is.”

“I am not,” protested Dick.

“I love them, every one,” breathed Betty.

“And have you been to Sunday-school regularly since I saw you, Betty?”

“Every Sunday, Uncle Jim.”

“That is fine. So has Dick, and he made me promise that I would tell you two children more stories even if I had to tell the old ones over again. I think I shall be able to tell you some new ones. Then, if the new ones run out, of course you will let me off — ”

“No,” answered Betty promptly with a vigorous shake of the head.

“We must have a name for these stories. Do

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you recall what you named the stories I told you when here last summer?" asked Uncle Jim.

"Of course I do. 'Uncle Jim's Bible Stories,'" replied Betty.

"Right. What shall we call those I am going to tell you now?" he asked.

Betty suggested that they call them by the same title, but Uncle Jim shook his head and said they must have a new name because they were to be stories from the Old Testament only. Neither Betty nor Dick could think of anything better than the name previously selected, so Uncle Jim gave the matter a few moments' thought.

"I have it!" he announced. "I'll tell you what we will call them, but if you don't like it we shall have to try again. What do you say to 'Uncle Jim's Stories from the Old Testament,' children?"

"Splendid!" cried Betty. "I think that is a perfectly wonderful title."

"Fine," agreed Dick.

Betty said the title sounded like real stories, and Uncle Jim assured her that the stories he would tell *would* be real stories, the most fascinating stories in all the world.

"Suppose we go into the parlor where we may be more comfortable," he suggested.

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Upon reaching the parlor, Betty drew up a hassock, and placing it before him, leaned an elbow on Uncle Jim's knee and fixed her now eager blue eyes on his face.

"What is it to be about, Father?" questioned Dick.

"Listen, and I will tell you," said Uncle Jim. He then began to tell them of "The Land of Nod, the Story of the Garden of Wonderful Trees."

THE LAND OF NOD

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN OF WONDERFUL TREES

“**P**ICTURE, if you can, children,” said Uncle Jim, “an angel with a sword that looked as if it were on fire, guarding the gates of a garden of wonderful trees. Think what a wonderful picture that must have been.

“This garden was in the East, in a strange, hot country, where you may sometimes find miles and miles of wind-tossed sand, and sometimes high, rocky mountains, and sometimes wide rivers that flow between banks of tall reeds. A part of it was called ‘The Land of Nod,’ which means the ‘Land of Wandering.’ In this country there were big cities, long since fallen into ruins, but once fine and strong, with kings’ palaces built inside their towered walls.

“Here lived people who could make beautiful things in silver and gold and brass, who could carve in ivory and mould delicate vases upon potters’ wheels. They went out hunting lions and other wild beasts in the desert, and came

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back to banquets where music was played to them as they ate. And at the kings' courts there were men who called themselves magicians, who thought that they could read the future in the water, or the sand, or in the stars.

"At a distance from the great cities, where the kings and princes were often very wicked, lived the people of the Tents. They had sheep and cattle, and they moved through the Land of Wandering, passing from place to place. Some of them were very rich and owned beautiful things in silver and gold, though they did not build temples and houses. But the greatest treasure they had, greater than any jewel that ever shone, was their belief in God.

"It was of God that they told in all their stories, and sang in all their songs. The little dark-haired, dark-eyed boys and girls who played about the tent doors, or sat near their mothers at sunset, never tired of hearing the beautiful tales. Some of their grown-up brothers had harps and cymbals, and were taught to make music and to dance, not for mere pleasure, but for worship of the Great God to whose people they belonged. Other nations about them prayed to the sun, or the moon, or even to big stone pillars set up in the temples of the hills. But

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the children of the Tent-People prayed to God alone.

“Among other tales, the mothers tried to tell the children the story of how God made the world. They said it was made in Six Wonderful Days — what we call the Creation. Every day, they explained, for six days running, God made something beautiful and new. The first of all was Light. And then He made the blue skies and seas, the mountains and the meadows, the waving trees, the sun, moon and stars, the fishes, the singing birds and all the animals, great and small. And on the seventh day He rested, and saw that all the things which He had made were good.

“The mothers could not explain these Six Wonderful Days of God, nor say how long or how short they had been. They only knew that the ‘evening and the morning’ — not the morning and the evening — made each one. Perhaps years and years of quiet twilight lay in between. But they told how, on the sixth day, God made man in His own image, and afterwards gave him a beautiful garden to live in, and a fair sweet woman to be his wife.”

“That was the Garden of Eden, wasn’t it, Uncle Jim?” interrupted Betty.

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"Yes, my dear," resumed Uncle Jim. "A river flowed through this blossoming garden and watered the sandy country in which were built the big cities. But the source of the river was in Eden, where God had planted the Garden of Wonderful Trees.

"How wistfully the Tent-People must have talked of it! Trees of every kind grew there. At noon the sunshine filtered through the boughs laden with apricots and oranges, figs and mulberries, pomegranates and grapes. The loving-kindness of God breathed through the blossoms, and His mercy dropped in the gentle silver dew. And the man and the woman, who were called Adam and Eve, might eat of all the fruit in the garden except that of a tree which grew in the midst of the others and was called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In the midst of the Garden also was another wonderful tree, the Tree of Life."

"Father, do you know what kind of trees those were?" questioned Dick.

Uncle Jim shook his head.

"Nobody knows what these two trees were like; but they must have been very beautiful, with cool and tempting fruit. We know that the Tree of Knowledge was pleasant to look at; while

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the Tree of Life seems to have been in a quiet holy place by itself, as if in its boughs lingered the secrets of God. It has never been described to us, and we can only picture it as a tree of fragrance and mystery.

“I do not think that Adam and Eve wandered often near to the sacred Tree of Life. But the Tree of Knowledge was in a more open place. And, one day, Eve was in the garden near at hand, when she heard a rustle by the tree, and presently, among the waving bushes, she saw the head of a big serpent. It spoke to her, and asked why she was not gathering the fine fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, which was the best fruit of all to eat.

“‘God told us not to,’ answered Eve simply. She was not afraid of the Serpent, but stood looking at it in wonder.

“‘What would happen to you if you disobeyed Him, do you think?’ asked the Serpent.

“‘We should surely die,’ said Eve.

“‘Surely not,’ the Serpent told her, with a wicked, cunning look in its eyes. ‘God knows that, if you eat that fruit, you will be great and powerful, as He is. That is the reason He has told you not to!’

“Eve looked at the Serpent again, and then

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she looked at the fruit on the Tree. It hung, tempting and fragrant, among the pretty leaves. There was such a lot of it, too; the Tree seemed almost to bend with its weight. The Serpent went nearer the Tree, and drew the branches towards her, rustling and twisting its long shining body among them.

“ ‘ You would be as powerful and know as much as God Himself,’ it repeated. ‘ Why don’t you gather and eat? ’

“ Eve wanted to obey God, but somehow the temptation was too strong. She plucked some of the fruit and ate it guiltily. And then Adam came down the path to see what she was doing, and she gave him some to eat too. When they had finished eating, they looked at each other. And, all at once, they were miserable and sorry and ashamed, and they hurried away from the Tree and the Serpent, and went to the other end of the garden, wondering why they should be unhappy.

“ The day wore on, the sun sank, and the garden grew sweet and cool. And then a deeper hush came over it, and a little wind thrilled through the hush, and a Voice spoke, gravely and tenderly, through the soft breeze. And Adam and Eve knew that God was in the garden, and

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they hid themselves more deeply, and trembled among the trees. But God called to them and asked why they had hidden themselves, and Adam answered that it was because they were so unhappy and ashamed.

“God knew before Adam spoke that they had eaten the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge; nothing else could have taken from them the joy and happiness that would always have been theirs if they had not disobeyed Him. He was very grieved and displeased, and told them they could not live in the garden any longer, for He could not trust them. And He told the Serpent that it, too, must be punished by being obliged always to crawl on the ground, instead of being able to lift itself up, as other creatures could. When God had said this, the Serpent crept away, and Adam and Eve went sorrowfully out into the desert. And God put His winged angels at the gate to guard the Tree of Life, so that the man and woman were never able to go back into the garden any more.

“This was the story told to the little children of the Tent-People in the Land of Wandering. Many hundreds of years afterwards a man named Moses wrote the story down, and it was put, with many other beautiful tales, in a great book. And

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this book, called the Book of Genesis, is now a part of the Bible, where, any day, you can read the story for yourselves. For, you see, Moses was inspired by God to tell His people all about the Creation, and to show how light could never have come out of darkness, nor land have been separated from water, nor birds and fishes have lived in air and sea, without the Power of God. And, although it had happened long, long before his day, Moses was led by God to tell, also, how sorrow and pain came to the man and the woman because they disobeyed God's command, and, in consequence, were sent out into the Land of Wandering, far away from the Garden of Wonderful Trees.

"You see, children, God gave the lesson of obedience to the first man and woman," finished Uncle Jim.

"Yes, but I don't understand why he punished the Serpent," said Dick. "Wasn't the Serpent put there by God on purpose to tempt Adam and Eve?"

"No doubt the Serpent was permitted to do that, but for going contrary to God's command it necessarily had to be punished. Then, too, the punishment of the Serpent was a further lesson to Adam and Eve."

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"Wasn't Eve afraid of the Serpent when it came to tempt her?" wondered Betty.

"No," answered Uncle Jim smilingly. "Can't you think why?"

Betty shook her head.

"I know," cried Dick. "She never had seen a snake and didn't know what it was."

Uncle Jim told Dick that he was right, but that he had not put his answer in proper form.

"Neither Adam nor Eve had knowledge until after they had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, so how could Eve be afraid?" replied Uncle Jim.

Betty here began to beg for another story.

"No, children. It is bedtime," reminded Mrs. Burroughs, who had been listening to the story with as keen interest as had Betty and Dick. "Uncle Jim is tired, too, after his long journey."

"To-morrow morning, but not another one until then," announced Uncle Jim with emphasis.

"And will you tell us more about the Beautiful Garden, then?" begged Betty, getting up reluctantly.

"No. The next story I tell you will be called, 'The Children of the Tents.' And now, good-night, children. Happy dreams."

THE CHILDREN OF THE TENTS

THE STORY OF THE DOVE AND THE RAINBOW

THREE pairs of eyes were eagerly fixed on Uncle Jim when he stepped into the parlor next morning after a long walk in the country. Mrs. Burroughs had brought in her sewing and was already busily at work.

“James, these children were beginning to get impatient,” she smiled up into the kindly face of Uncle Jim.

“Just so,” he nodded. “Impatience early in life will teach them to be patient later on. Children, what story did I promise to tell you this morning?”

“‘The Children of the Tents,’” answered Betty quickly.

“Right,” said Uncle Jim, seating himself in what Dick thought was the most uncomfortable chair in the house.

“The children of those early Bible days loved stories just the same as children do now, and we can picture them in our minds, curled up on the

THE CHILDREN OF THE TENTS

sands of the desert at their mothers' feet in front of their tent-homes, eagerly listening to these same wonderful stories. The one I shall tell you this morning is one that parents told in the long, long ago. Some of the things in this story you heard in 'Uncle Jim's Bible Stories' when I was here last summer. Now for the story.

"Once upon a time there lived a man called Noah. That name means 'Comfort.'

"He was called Noah when he was a baby because his father believed that, through this little child, his other children would be blessed and helped to make better homes for themselves in the parched and dusty Country of Wandering, where the sun was so hot, and the ground so scorched and dry. Noah lived a long way from the lost Garden, among the cities of some very wicked people. As he kept watch by his tents he must have seen the wicked kings and nobles hunting in the desert; and when he traveled near their palaces he would see them at feasts in honor of their idols of wood and stone. But Noah clung fast to the true faith — the belief in one great God who had made the heavens and the earth.

"One day, when this good and just man was growing old, God's voice came to him, and Noah

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listened. The Voice told him that, owing to the wickedness of the people, a great flood was to cover the earth, but that God meant to save Noah, and his wife, and their sons and their wives from the great waters. For Noah and his family loved God, and He knew that they would teach His word to their children and grandchildren. Noah was told to build a great boat, called an Ark, and to take shelter in it, with his sons and daughters-in-law. And into the Ark all the animals of the world, two of every sort, were to be taken also."

"It must have made Noah very sad to learn that all the people on the earth were to be drowned," interrupted Dick.

"I know that I should have cried," murmured Betty.

"Perhaps it did make Noah sad, but he loved God, and knew that God's ways were the ways of wisdom," replied Uncle Jim.

"If you were to travel now to that far country where the rivers Tigris and Euphrates flow, and where so many soldiers fought during the Great War, you would see, passing up and down the streams, big barges shaped almost like the Noah's Arks we all know so well. In these big barges animals and people are carried, and taken

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to and fro upon the water. It was just such a boat as this that Noah was told to build, only very, very much larger. It was to be made of strong hard wood, and covered with pitch inside and out, so that it would be waterproof. It was to have three stories—like a house with attics—a door in the side, and a window near the top. Because, as well as the people and the animals, a lot of food had to be stored, so that they might not starve.

“So Noah and his sons built this wonderful boat, bigger and more marvelous than any ship that had ever been built before.

“Then Noah and his family went inside, and waited, with the door open, for the animals to follow. What a wonderful waiting-time it must have been! Who can tell in what way the whisper of the coming flood traveled across the valleys, and above the mountain-tops, through the deep forests and over the foaming rivers, to draw the animals towards the Ark that was prepared for them?

“But they came slowly or quickly as the case might be, through the gray drifting mists, leaving their homes and their companions behind. Can you imagine it all? How a great lion and lioness trod, with soft feet and tawny limbs,

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over the desert sand to the marvelous boat? How a pair of humming birds, bright as jewels, flew in at the open door? How, presently, a soft-eyed fawn persuaded his still softer-eyed little wife to patter timidly up the bank that led to the entrance; and then how two blue butterflies, with wings like silk, fluttered silently to shelter! And, as night fell, the owls must have flown in with strange cries, and the bats have come, quite noiselessly; while morning would bring the wild ducks, and the rabbits, and the larks. Two by two they came."

"Isn't that wonderful?" murmured Betty.

"I can almost see them going into the Ark," agreed Dick, nodding thoughtfully. "It is also wonderful that they did not get to fighting among themselves."

"And when they were all there God shut them in," resumed Uncle Jim. "Then, after seven days, the great rivers rose, the little brooks became torrents, and the marshes turned into lakes. And from the clouds the rain fell without stopping. To and fro, to and fro, the Ark floated on the face of the waters, until, at last, after many days, God caused the rain to cease.

"So, one morning, in the seventh month, and the seventeenth day of the month, the Ark rested

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on the top of a high mountain called Ararat, the waters began to go down, and those who were inside the Ark saw the peaks of other mountains above the flood. After forty days more, Noah opened the little window, and let a raven fly out. Also he sent forth a small, soft gray dove. The raven went forth to and fro, but never came back. But the little dove came back, and fluttered against the window, and Noah put out his hand and drew her in.

“Then, after a week, he sent the dove out again. Again she came back. But this time she had an olive leaf in her beak, that she had plucked from a bough. Noah knew then that the green trees were above water. So, after seven days more, he let the dove fly again. This time the dove did not come back at all.

“Then, having waited for the waters to dry up, Noah opened the door of the Ark, and he and his wife, and his sons and their wives, went out on to the top of the high mountain in the morning light; and the animals followed them. So Noah built an altar on the mountain-top, and gave thanks to God.

“While Noah was offering up thanks, God’s voice came to him through the mists, promising that He would never destroy the world by flood

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any more, but that, while the earth remained, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, should not cease. And God told Noah to cultivate the earth, and bade him look for the token of the promise in the clouds.

“As Noah looked, he saw beautiful gleaming colors group and gather in the mists of the dawn. The colors rose high in a shining semicircle over the mountain. And Noah, looking at the rainbow, and remembering his deliverance, knelt again in adoration and thankfulness.”

“Was there not a living thing left in the world after that great flood, Father?” asked Dick.

“Not a thing, Son, except the people and the animals in the Ark. And from that beginning came the races and the animals of the world, and all that is life as we know it to-day.”

“Tell us another,” begged Betty. “Please do, Uncle Jim. There is plenty of time before Mother and I start to get dinner ready.”

Mrs. Burroughs smiled and nodded to Uncle Jim, who then cleared his throat and announced that he would tell just one more.

“This story,” he said, “will be called, ‘The Angel at the Well.’ I know that Betty especially will like it.”

THE ANGEL AT THE WELL

THE STORY OF THE PRINCE IN THE WILDERNESS

“**I** SUPPOSE you children expect me to talk all day,” began Uncle Jim laughingly. “I know the story I am about to tell will interest you because it is both beautiful and fascinating.

“Many, many years had passed,” continued the story teller, “since the incidents took place that are related in the story I have just told you. A great man had grown up in the country that had once been covered with the waters of the flood. Does either of you know his name?”

“I know. Solomon!” cried Betty.

“Wrong!” answered Uncle Jim with a shake of the head. “Solomon came later, as you will hear at another time. The man I am going to tell you about was at first called Abram; in after years God told him he must change his name to Abraham, because that meant a father of many nations. Abraham left the land where he was

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born and went to live in Canaan, which we call Palestine, or the Holy Land, to-day. After many wanderings, he set up his tents in the plain of Mamre, near Hebron; and lived there with his wife, Sarah, and his little son, Ishmael, and Ishmael's mother, who was called Hagar, a brown-eyed, dark-haired Egyptian.

“ Abraham and Sarah had brought Hagar back from Egypt after a long visit they had once paid there; and Sarah, who had no children of her own, was very glad, at first, that Abraham and Hagar had a little son. Abraham was a sort of shepherd-king, and had much gold and silver, and many flocks of cattle and sheep. Unless he had a son of his own, all these things would pass away from his family at his death. Then, too, Sarah knew that God had promised her husband that he should be the father of a great nation. So she thought that, through Ishmael, Abraham's name would be carried on.

“ Well, they all lived contentedly together until, at last, Sarah had a little baby of her own, and knew, by this, that God had blessed her and Abraham very greatly indeed. They called the little baby Isaac. Abraham loved Sarah's tiny son very, very dearly; but he still loved the lad Ishmael as well. And it seemed as if they might

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have gone on in happiness if Ishmael had only been kind to and loved this soft, helpless little baby.

“But Ishmael was a wild, thoughtless boy, probably always wanting to shoot arrows at the goats among the rocks, and the hawks overhead. He was rather impatient, to tell the truth, with the fuss that everybody made about the new baby. And once, when Abraham and Sarah had a big splendid feast in tiny Isaac’s honor, Ishmael laughed right out at the whole thing — and laughed at the new baby most of all.”

“Oh, what a rude boy!” exclaimed Betty.

“I am glad I am not like that. Aren’t you glad, too, Betty?” questioned Dick teasingly.

Betty answered only with a toss of the head as Uncle Jim resumed.

“Sarah saw him laughing, and was very angry — so angry that she forgot the time when she had been glad that Abraham and Hagar had a little son. She went to Abraham, and asked him to send both Ishmael and his mother away. For she said, ‘Hagar is only an Egyptian slave, after all, and I am a princess of the shepherd-kings, and have given you a son of your own family and tribe.’

“Abraham listened with a sad heart. He did

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not know what to do. He loved Ishmael; but he saw that the lad would never be kind to Isaac, and that Sarah would always be unhappy and vexed. And he troubled himself very much about it, until God's voice came to him in the night, and comforted him.

"The voice told him to do as Sarah had said, and gave a promise that, though it must be Isaac who should carry on Abraham's name and inherit his shepherd-kingdom, yet Ishmael also should be greatly blessed, and have twelve princes for his sons. So Abraham was comforted, and knew that he might safely send Hagar away, for she would have God as her protector, to look after her and her young son.

"So, while Sarah and Isaac were still asleep in the tent, and only the early cries of the goat-herds and the soft bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle could be heard on the plain outside, Abraham rose, and went out in search of Hagar. He found her in her own tent with Ishmael, all unconscious of what was going to happen. Very sorrowfully, yet knowing that harm could not come to them, he bade the Egyptian woman and her son good-bye. And, giving Hagar as much bread as she could carry, and setting a big bottle of water on her shoulder, he sent her into the

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wilderness, with Ishmael, laughing and light-hearted as ever, running before her.

“Abraham watched, in grief and yet in hope, until they were out of sight. Then he turned back to his own tent, and prayed to God for them while the mother and son went on in the beautiful clear air of the morning, which made the sands of the desert glisten like diamonds, and showed up the high brown rocks, all sharp and dark against the blue sky.

“Hagar, perhaps hardly thinking what she did, turned her steps towards the great sandy trail that led from Canaan, through the desert of Beersheba, into Egypt, the land of her own birth. Along this trail large companies of people, called ‘caravans,’ often came and went, with camels, and covered wagons, and teams of mules shaking their sweet-toned bridle-bells. Perhaps Hagar thought that she might come across such a caravan going down to Egypt with timber, or sheepskins, or rare woven carpets for sale. If she were to meet one, the travelers would most likely be kind to her, and give her and Ishmael help upon their hard and lonely way.”

“Uncle Jim, don’t you think it was unkind of Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away like that?” protested Betty.

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“It was God’s command, and he was watching over the lonely travelers,” replied Uncle Jim. “Once before she had been down the self-same desert road. Long, long ago, before Ishmael was born, Sarah had one day been angry with the Egyptian girl-slave. And Sarah’s anger was quite natural, for Hagar had been ungrateful, and Sarah had been kind. So Hagar had run away from both Abraham and his wife, and had been found by an angel near a well, on her way back to Egypt. And the angel had told her to return to her kind master and mistress, and to submit to Sarah. At the same time, this messenger from God had promised that Ishmael should soon be born.

“Very likely Hagar was now thinking of this, and trying to find her way along the caravan-road to the same well. But somehow she wandered in a wrong direction, and got lost in the great, hot, lonely desert. Ishmael, after being so laughing and brave, grew faint and weary. And all the water in the bottle was drunk, so that Hagar could not give him anything to quench his thirst, or to cool his parched throat and tongue.

“On and on they wandered, over the scorching sand, until at last, poor, weary, stricken Hagar broke down. She laid Ishmael under the slight

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shade of a little bush, and she went a good way off. 'For,' she said to herself brokenly, 'let me not see the death of the child.'

"Then, kneeling down, she broke into deep and bitter sobbing, in the weary desert, with the wild animals not far away among the rocks, and the cruel vultures hanging overhead. But, suddenly, as she sobbed, an angel's voice called to her, softly and clearly, from the sky:

"'Hagar, what aileth thee? Fear not! For God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is!

"'Arise! Lift up the lad and hold him in thine hand! For I will make him a great nation!'

"Hagar hushed her weeping and listened. The angel's voice died away; but, in the silence, she heard a wonderful sound instead — the soft ripple of cool water, bubbling up through the hot sand. Then God opened her eyes, and she saw that she was kneeling quite close to a sparkling well. She filled the empty bottle with water again, and went joyfully across to Ishmael, and gave him to drink.

"God kept the promise that He had given both to Abraham, far away in his tent in Mamre, and to Hagar, sitting in the desert by the well. And Ishmael grew up brave and strong, and became a great archer in the wilderness.

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“When he was grown up, Hagar chose a wife for him out of Egypt—a brown-eyed, dark-haired maiden, just as she had been when she was young. And they had many sons and daughters, princes and princesses of the wilderness, like Ishmael and his wife themselves.

“Isaac and Ishmael met again one day, and remembered that they were brothers. That was on the day when they buried their good and faithful old father Abraham, laying him to rest in the quiet shadows of a great cave near the plain of Mamre, where already Sarah, his wife, had rested for many years. Isaac, too, was married by that time to a kind and beautiful woman called Rebekah, who had comforted him after his mother’s death. Ishmael lived in the desert, but Isaac grew up among the tents of his father.”

“Is that the end of the story?” questioned Betty regretfully.

“Yes, Betty.”

“I think I should like to hear more about Isaac and Ishmael,” spoke up Dick.

“Very well, Son. Next time I will tell you an interesting story about something that happened to Isaac,” promised Uncle Jim.

“Ishmael wasn’t such a bad sort after all,” observed Dick, thoughtfully.

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"No," agreed Uncle Jim. "He must have been a man of great courage, living as he did on the desert where there were many ferocious beasts, and perhaps many bad men as well. Instead of a gun, he had only his bow and arrows with which to defend himself."

Betty wished to know if Ishmael took his beautiful Egyptian bride with him into the desert and the wilderness. Uncle Jim said that the dark-haired Egyptian maiden really did share most of his hardships with Ishmael.

"Ishmael had good in him, too, for he accepted the forgiveness that Isaac offered him over the grave of Father Abraham, and they were reunited as brothers."

"Come, Betty," interposed Mrs. Burroughs. "We must get dinner now."

"Coming, Mother dear," answered Betty brightly, springing up in obedience to her mother's word. "But don't forget, Uncle Jim, that story about Isaac comes next!"

"Yes," promised Uncle Jim. "The story about Isaac will be the next, and we will call that narrative, 'The Voice in the Night, the Story of Isaac and the Beautiful Angel.'"

THE VOICE IN THE NIGHT

THE STORY OF ISAAC AND THE BEAUTIFUL ANGEL

IT was not until evening that Uncle Jim and his little audience again assembled to hear the story of Isaac and the Beautiful Angel, for which the children had been eagerly waiting.

At Mrs. Burroughs' suggestion, they had taken their chairs out to the back porch that overlooked the orchard. The air out there was full of sweet fragrance, and the full moon silvered the leaves of the trees. So beautiful was the night that, for several moments, no one spoke. Betty nestled close to Uncle Jim, who slipped a comforting arm about her, while Dick, by Mrs. Burroughs' side, stood straight and silent gazing up at the stars. It was a wonderful moment, a sweet moment for each of them — a moment that lived long in memory for Betty and Dick especially, who were thinking of the stories they had heard, and were painting mind pictures of them.

“The story that I am about to relate to you,”

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began Uncle Jim, "should be a great object lesson to all of us, as it has been to millions before us.

"It was a warm night on the plain of Mamre, probably just such a night as this one, warm, balmy and sweet. The stars, we learn, were shining like great lamps in the deep, blue-black heavens, as they do in the eastern lands. And perhaps they were the same stars that you see up above you now, children.

"The wind, sweet and silky-dry, was blowing over the closed flowers, and Abraham lay sound asleep in the cool, dark shelter of his tent. Can you not picture that scene, children?"

"Yes," they breathed.

"It is a beautiful picture, too," murmured Mrs. Burroughs.

Uncle Jim resumed his story.

"It must have been a nice tent, as suited the greatness of a shepherd-king, with the carpets soft and the hangings warm and fine. All was peaceful, when suddenly, through the stillness of the tent, a voice sounded. And the voice was that of God.

"'Abraham,' said the voice. 'Abraham!'

"Abraham woke instantly. 'Behold!' he answered. 'Here I am!'

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“Then the voice told him to do what seemed a very strange and terrible thing.

“‘Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest,’ fell the sad words upon the darkness, ‘and get thee unto the land of Moriah. And offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.’

“The voice ceased, but Abraham, startled and bewildered, made no reply. Sacrifice his little son Isaac! the child for whose sake he had parted with Ishmael, and whom he loved better than all the world! How was he to do this thing? Yet God had spoken. And Abraham had never failed to obey.

“Can you two children, for the moment, put yourselves in Abraham’s place, and imagine that you have been ordered by God to sacrifice your own child? What would you do? What would be your thoughts? What would you say? Would your faith in God be great enough to give you strength to make the great sacrifice?” asked Uncle Jim impressively.

There was no reply, but Betty and Dick were thinking deeply.

“Abraham’s faith was great enough to make any sacrifice demanded by God,” said Uncle Jim.

“So, when morning broke, all brilliant in

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soft rose lights over the eastern hills, he rose from his bed, and went out into the beautiful dawn — just as he had gone out to waken Hagar and Ishmael a few years before. He saddled one of his asses, and called two of the young shepherds who were his servants; then he went to rouse his little son, Isaac, from sleep.

“Isaac would sleep near his mother Sarah, and there is no doubt that her tent would be very beautiful indeed, for she was a great princess among the shepherd-kings. She would have purple curtains, and a silver hanging lamp burning fragrant oil, and Isaac would most likely sleep on a soft mattress that in the East is called a bed.

“The little boy woke quickly, and was only too pleased to follow his father into the clear light of the dewy morning. They went down with the young shepherds to cut some wood — perhaps from almond or fir-trees. Abraham and his servants chopped the boughs, while Isaac looked on eagerly. He knew that his father was going to offer up a sacrifice to God, and I dare say he was very pleased and proud because he was allowed to help.

“You know, in those days so long ago, the people in the land where Abraham lived would

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sometimes give what they called a burnt-offering to God. They would kill a goat or a lamb — quite quickly, so that it felt no pain — and then lay it on an altar built of stones, and put branches of wood all round it, and set the wood on fire. This was known as a ‘sacrifice.’

“So the sad shepherd-king seated his little son in front of him on the ass, and the two servants took the wood, and they set off, in sorrowful procession, towards the distant hills of Moriah. It was a three days’ journey, and oh! so different from the usual way in which Isaac traveled with his father. For generally they would sit on stately camels, with fine tents in wagons drawn by oxen, and with a lot of servants to wait on them, and to prepare food and shelter at night. But Isaac understood that this was a sort of a journey to be made in humble obedience and devotion to God.

“The way they took was in exactly the opposite direction from that which Hagar had taken with little Ishmael. So, instead of traveling along the hot desert road towards Egypt, they journeyed among gray rocks and through stony valleys with wild shrubs growing here and there. They would see the young deer feeding among the scattered patches of grass, and hear

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the loud humming of the bees. There would be wild hill goats, too, leaping up the mountain-sides; and little foxes and jackals that lived in rocky holes. Always they traveled uphill, towards the high mountain in the distance, with its dark heights and silvery olive-woods.

“You may feel quite sure that little Isaac enjoyed this new and wonderful journey, but Abraham must have been very downcast and sad. He went on steadily, however, and then, on the third day, he lifted up his eyes, and saw the place for the sacrifice afar off.

“The little procession had just reached the top of a barren hill, where the wind blew strong and free. In front of them was a long gray plain, with a range of hills to the east. And at the end of the plain rose the steep slopes of Mount Moriah.

“Long, long afterwards, it was on Mount Moriah that a beautiful Temple was built, about which you will hear later. But, when Abraham saw it afar off, it was just a great, lonely hill covered with olive-woods. Not very far away was a half-hidden, mysterious city called Salem, which Abraham had visited some years ago. In this mysterious city a priest-king lived, who worshiped God, and who had a strange long name

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—Melchizedek. He had blessed Abraham at Salem, and had brought forth bread and wine to give him; for it was at a time when Abraham had helped to drive away the enemies of the priest-king.

“But now Abraham, chief of the shepherds, was just a lonely, weary, sorrowful pilgrim, instead of a conquering prince of God, as the other king had called him. And no mighty priest came forth from Salem, with bread and wine, to meet him. All alone, without help or comfort, he must go forward on to Moriah, to do as God had told him.

“So he said to the young servants, ‘Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.’ Then he took the wood for the burnt-offering, and laid it on Isaac, his son. And he took the little vessel that held the charcoal-fire in his hand, and a knife also, and he and Isaac went away, both together, down into the stony plain towards the mountain at the end.

“For a little time they walked along the rocky path in silence, with the sound of the wind about them. High above the sides of the eastern hills the sun had risen, and was now shining, bright and beautiful, upon the sad father and his won-

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dering son. Little Isaac felt awed. He seemed to know that something sad and dreadful was going to happen.

“At last he looked up, and said, in a troubled voice, ‘My father?’ And Abraham answered gravely, ‘Here am I, my son.’ Then Isaac, still more troubled, said, ‘Behold the fire and the wood! But where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?’”

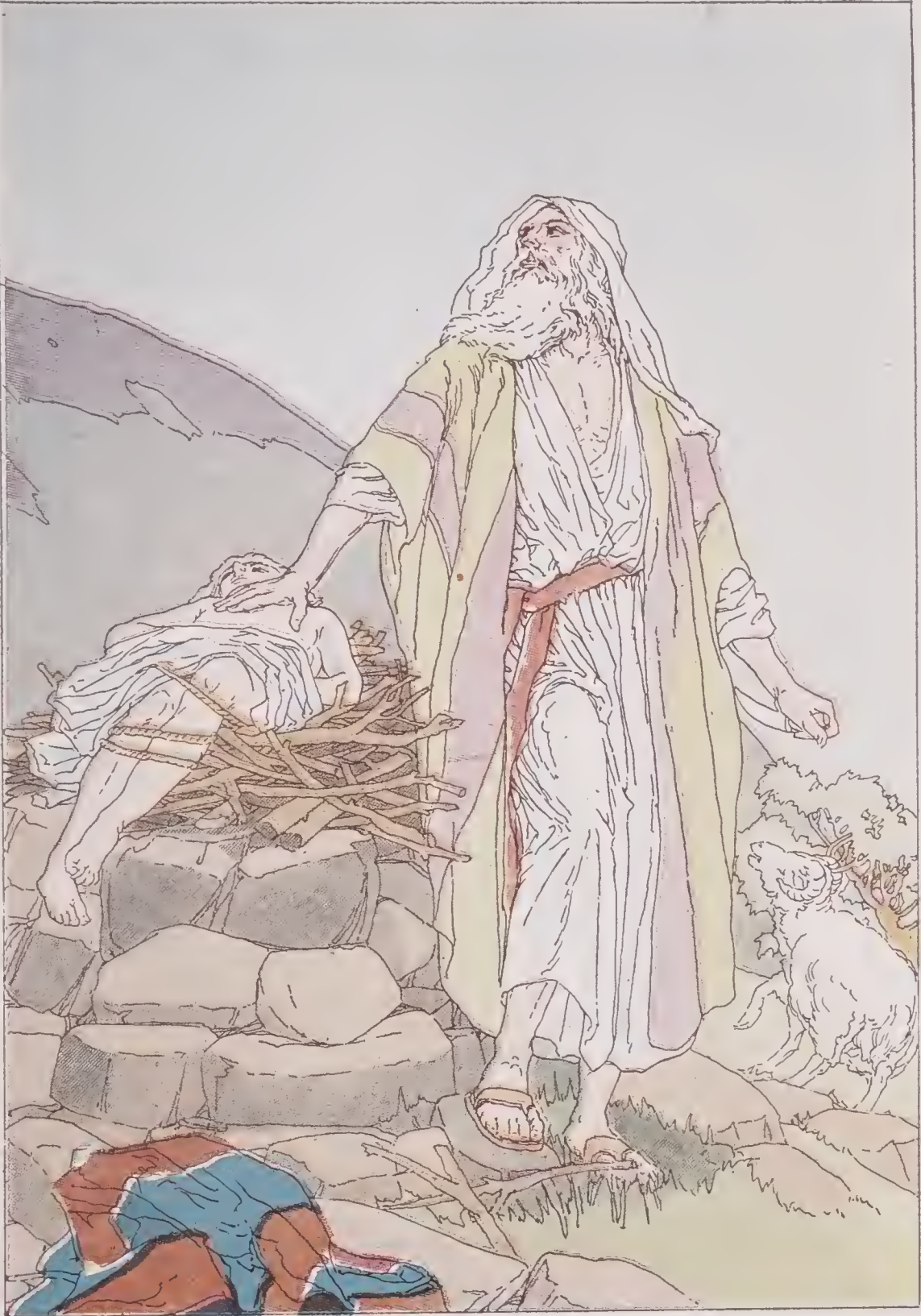
“Then Abraham’s face grew set and almost stern in its anguish. But all he answered was: ‘My son, God will provide, Himself, a lamb for the burnt-offering!’”

“Oh, the poor boy!” cried Betty. “Uncle Jim! How could the poor boy’s father ever bring himself to —”

“Please do not interrupt me, Betty,” rebuked Uncle Jim.

“And then they went on in silence again.

“At last they came to the foot of Mount Moriah, and, side by side, climbed the steep path that led to the top. Little Isaac was silent and wistful now, and Abraham spoke not a word. When they reached the summit of the hill, still in silence, Abraham built an altar, small and square, of the stones that lay scattered around. All was still on the mountain, and the wild red



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deer, and the upland goats, stood watchful and silent upon the high rocks, while the pretty does drew back with their fawns into the darkling olive-woods. From Salem, perhaps, came strange, faint music—the songs and cymbals of the morning sacrifice offered by the priestly king. But Isaac and his father were quite alone.

“Then, when Abraham had built the altar, he laid the wood in order, and he took his little son Isaac, bound him, and laid him on the altar and upon the wood. Then he stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

“Isaac had not spoken or moved. He had just looked into his father’s face, and wondered, pitifully, what it all meant. Then, just as Abraham took the knife in his hand, a high clear call came ringing over the mountain, a call that seemed to drop straight from the sky.

“‘Abraham! Abraham!’ came the call.

“The shepherd-king, still with the knife in his hand, began to tremble. Yet he answered bravely, ‘Here am I!’

“Then the angel of the Lord said, ‘Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him! For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son.’

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“ Abraham was oh! so glad and happy that little Isaac was saved. So now he unbound the child, and lifted him to the ground, and they gave thanks together. And then Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo! behind him was a ram — one of the wild mountain sheep — caught in a thicket by his horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt-offering in place of his son.

“ Abraham called the name of that place ‘Jehovah-jireh,’ which means ‘God will see, or provide.’

“ Long afterwards, on the two hills of Zion and Moriah was built the city of Jerusalem, where Christ taught in the Temple, and showed the glory of God. But, once upon a time, Moriah had been just the great wooded hill where the angel saved little Isaac, and told his earthly father of the watchful love of the Father of Heaven.

“ The angel called to Abraham out of heaven a second time, after the ram had been offered up, and told him how pleased God was with him for his faithful obedience, and because he had not held back his one little son, Isaac. And the angel repeated the promise God had made to Abraham before Isaac was born, that his children and

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grandchildren and great-grandchildren should be as many as the stars of the Heaven or as the sand upon the seashore."

As the story came to a close, Betty brushed a hand across her eyes, and Dick drew a long breath of relief.

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed. "What a wonderful story. You never told us a more wonderful one. Did Isaac know, Uncle Jim — did he know what Abraham was about to do?" she asked a little tremulously.

"When his father bound and placed him on the altar, he must have known, for he undoubtedly had seen many sacrifices before that," replied Uncle Jim. "And if he did know, his faith, too, must have been very great, young as he was."

"Oh, what a splendid boy Isaac must have been," cried Betty enthusiastically.

"Yes, he was," agreed Uncle Jim. "Dick, I have asked what you would do were you in Abraham's place. I'll now ask what you would do were you in Isaac's place?"

"I — I think I should run away," answered Dick hesitatingly.

"No, no, Dick!" cried Mrs. Burroughs. "I know better than that. You are not the kind

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of boy that runs away. Instead, you would face the music like the man you really are."

"Uncle Jim, would you sacrifice Dick that way if God told you to do so?" demanded Betty wonderingly.

Betty's pointed question seemed to take Uncle Jim back. He was at a loss for an answer, and his face took on a troubled expression.

"Would you?" persisted Betty, fixing her blue eyes on Uncle Jim's face.

"Betty, how does one know what one would do in such a moment as that?" he replied. "I should hope that my faith in God were great enough to enable me to obey the command of the Master. Fortunately, God asks no such sacrifices of us now, but he does demand lesser sacrifices, little ones, indeed, when compared with the great one he demanded of Abraham.

"So, all the more eager should we be to make these little sacrifices, willingly and happily. Suppose we all begin doing this now. Yes, let us begin to-morrow. What do you say, children?"

"Yes," promised Betty and Dick in one voice.

"Then run along to bed, you two, and give me an opportunity to chat with your mother," added Uncle Jim briskly. "I think I have given you something to think about between now and our

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next meeting. In the morning we shall have something to say on the same subject."

"What about the next story?" questioned Dick, as he and Betty dutifully got up to start for bed.

"Yes, Uncle Jim, please tell us what it is to be about," urged Betty. "If you don't, I shan't sleep a wink to-night," she threatened laughingly.

"Very well. You know I shouldn't like to have my little Betty lie awake all night when a word from her Uncle Jim would give her sweet dreams. The title of the next story will be, 'When the Sheaves Stood Up, the Story of Joseph and His Brothers.' Good-night, children."

WHEN THE SHEAVES STOOD UP

THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

“WHAT are sheaves, Uncle Jim?” asked Betty when Uncle Jim came in and sat down to tell them another story. Betty had been thinking of the title announced by Uncle Jim the day before, and she had been wondering what sheaves were, never before having heard of them.

“Dick, I think, knows,” nodded Uncle Jim, and Dick nodded in reply.

“Well, please tell me,” insisted Betty.

“Sheaves?” said Uncle Jim. “Have you never seen reapers in the wheat fields cutting the golden grain — seen the bundles, bound at the middle like an hour-glass?”

“Yes, I have, Uncle.”

“Those bundles are called sheaves, and they are strewn along on the ground behind the reapers, until other men come and stand them up to prevent their getting wet and sprouting. They stand the sheaves up in bunches called shocks,” explained Uncle Jim. “When the grain is being

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garnered you will see shocks all over the field, and it is a pretty sight to look upon."

"Yes, Father, but what made the sheaves that you are going to tell us about stand up?" questioned Dick.

"Son, don't get impatient. Don't you two children wish to hear the story? If not I'll not tell it."

"Yes, yes," cried Dick and Betty in chorus.

"Very well, then, give me your attention and I will begin.

"You remember that Isaac had married a beautiful woman named Rebekah, who made him very happy. You can read all about her and her marriage in the Bible; and also about her son Jacob, and *his* wife Rachel, with whom he fell deeply in love when he met her bringing her father's sheep to drink at a well. Now I am going to tell you the story of Jacob's and Rachel's two sons, who were called Joseph and Benjamin, and were born when Jacob was growing into an old man.

"Jacob had another name, Israel, which means 'a prince of God.' Abraham, too, had been called God's prince once, by some people known as the children of Heth, who had sold him a field for a burying-place. For people from many nations

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owned land in Canaan, and built cities there, long ago destroyed and forgotten, like that mysterious city of Salem, on the hill opposite Mount Moriah. But the shepherd-princes — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — built no cities. They moved from place to place with their servants, and their great flocks of sheep and cattle; and sometimes, where they spread their tents, they bought the land from the kings. These kings did not worship God in the same way that the shepherds did — but they had respect for the shepherds, and would always sell a piece of land to those of them with whom they were friendly.”

“Why did the people live in tents instead of building houses for themselves?” wondered Dick.

“First, because they preferred tents, and second because they were wanderers,” said Uncle Jim.

“Were they gypsies?” asked Betty.

“Something like that,” smiled Uncle Jim.

“We will now go on with our story; then if you wish to ask other questions I will try to answer them.

“Well, Jacob, whose other name was Israel, moved about with his flocks and his servants, and at last, when Joseph was a boy and Benjamin quite a tiny baby, he settled down in the very spot where his grandfather Abraham had spread

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his tents long, long ago. This was, you remember, among the green fields of Mamre, in Hebron; and Abraham and Isaac were both buried there. Rachel was dead, too. But, for her sweet sake, Jacob loved Joseph and Benjamin far better than the sons of Leah, who had been his first wife.

“He could not help loving Joseph, the son of his old age; for Joseph was a bright clever lad, and had a warm, kind heart for tiny Benjamin. One day, to show how highly he thought of Joseph, and that he meant this younger son to be a mighty chief, Jacob gave the boy a beautiful new coat. It was made in many colors, and it floated about him like the cloak of a great prince, as he walked on the hills with his long shepherd’s staff in his hand. When his brothers saw Joseph in this gleaming coat they were angry and jealous, and would not speak kindly to him at all.

“Now, one night, Joseph had a strange dream and he ran to his brothers to tell them about it.

“‘Hear!’ he said. ‘Hear, I pray you, this dream that I have dreamed.

“‘Behold, we were binding sheaves in a field, and lo! my sheaf arose, and stood upright! And behold, your sheaves stood up, too, all around, and bent down before my sheaf!’”

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“But, Uncle, what made them stand up?” begged Betty.

“They didn’t really do so. Don’t you understand? Joseph only dreamed that they stood up, and he could not help thinking that it was a very wonderful dream. You would have thought so, too. Joseph believed in dreams and he knew that his dream had a meaning,” explained Uncle Jim.

“Picture it to yourselves: the sunlit field of corn; the big sheaves lying upon the ground, with all the brothers binding them ready to be put into the stack. And then imagine Joseph’s sheaf rising up, and the brothers’ sheaves doing the same, and bending in homage to Joseph’s sheaf, while everybody in the cornfield stood silent and amazed!

“But his brothers were angry. ‘Shalt thou indeed reign over us?’ they said. And they hated him the more.

“Then Joseph had a second dream. He dreamed he was alone in the deep sky, and behold! the sun and the moon and eleven stars did reverence to him. This time he told the dream to his father, as well as to his brothers, but his father rebuked him, and said:

“‘What is this dream that thou hast dreamed?

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Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee?'

"But, although Jacob rebuked Joseph, he thought about the dream. The eleven brothers, however, now disliked Joseph more than ever.

"Some time before this Jacob had bought a large piece of land on the other side of Mount Moriah; a place called Shechem, where he had sunk a deep well. Soon after Joseph had dreamed his strange dreams, the eleven brothers went on a journey to Shechem, where their father had a lot of sheep and cattle out at pasture. Jacob, who, as you know, was now an old man, stayed behind in Hebron: but one day he called Joseph, and told him to go to Shechem and see how his brothers and the flocks were faring.

"So Joseph set off on his travels, which would take him past that very mountain where Abraham and Isaac had heard the voice of the angel many years before. But when, after four or five days, he got to Shechem, he saw only the wide rolling pastures looking lonely and empty in the sunshine. The big stone was before the mouth of the well, and no flocks lay round it, as they always lay in the morning and the evening, waiting for the shepherds to roll away the stone and fill the long troughs with water from

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their goat-skin buckets. There was nobody but one man, a solitary wanderer like Joseph himself. This man told him that his brothers had taken the flocks to new feeding-grounds, a little farther on.

“So Joseph went in the direction of the place the man had described; and presently, in the distance, he saw the clustered tents, and heard the soft bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the cattle. He hurried forward to greet his brothers. But they had seen him afar off, and they hated him as much as ever.

“‘Behold this dreamer cometh!’ they said mockingly. ‘Let us kill him and throw him into some pit. We can say that a wild beast has devoured him! And then we shall see what becomes of his dreams!’

“But one of the brothers, Reuben, was kinder than the rest. He felt that he must save Joseph’s life. So he suggested that they should throw him into a pit, but should not spill his blood. And he thought that, when the others were gone, he would come back and rescue the boy, and send him home to his father.

“So when Joseph, pleased and proud after his journey, came eagerly to greet his brothers, they took hold of him roughly, stripped his beautiful

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coat from his shoulders, and threw him into an empty pit near by. Then they sat down to eat their supper.

“As they were eating, there came, stepping slowly and proudly down the distant road, a long procession of camels, sending out their soft shadows over the ground, and showing like a wonderful dark picture against the clear blue sky. On the backs of the camels were big loads, that held spices and balm and myrrh. The camels were coming from Gilead, which was a grassy country on the other side of the river Jordan, and had very many kinds of plants growing in the rich soil. The men to whom the camels belonged were a company of Ishmaelites, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Ishmael and his Egyptian wife, conquerors and princes of the desert, who traveled up and down its long stretches, carrying spices and gums to sell in Egypt, and bringing back fine silk and cotton in return.

“Then Judah, another brother, said, ‘Let us not slay our brother, but let us sell him to these travelers for a slave. For he is our brother and our flesh.’

“The brothers agreed to this, and they drew Joseph up again out of the pit, and sold him to

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the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. So the loved young son of Israel was taken away by the Ishmaelites, seated on one of the big brown camels. And the procession, with the strange sweet song of the drivers, and the ceaseless tinkling of the bridle bells, passed away from the meadows of Shechem, where the wild flowers blossomed and the sheep and cattle fed; and went swinging away towards the great desert trail that led down to Egypt, along the very road where Hagar had wept over Ishmael in the wilderness on the way to Shur.

“But when Reuben, who had not been there when Joseph was sold, went to the pit and found that the lad was gone, he rent his clothes for grief. Then the cruel brothers killed a kid, dipped poor Joseph’s fine coat in it, and took the coat, all covered with blood, back to Hebron, and showed it to Jacob, telling him that they had found it. And Jacob, like Reuben, rent his clothes and wept.

“‘An evil beast has devoured my young son Joseph,’ he said. ‘I shall go down mourning to my grave.’

“But, all the time, Joseph was safe with the traders on the big camels, and the Ishmaelites, when they reached Egypt, sold him to a rich man

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called Potiphar, who was an officer under Pharaoh, a great Egyptian king."

"Oh, I'm so glad that they didn't kill Joseph," cried Betty as the story came to a close.

"They would have done so had it not been for Reuben, who pleaded for his life," Uncle Jim informed her.

"Just the same, his brothers were very cruel when they took off his beautiful coat and threw him into the pit. Oh, what a horrid thing to do to one's brother," said Betty.

"Perhaps it was all a part of God's great plan," suggested Uncle Jim.

Dick asked why the eleven brothers disliked Joseph so.

"One reason is that they were jealous because he was Jacob's favorite son. No doubt you know of families right here at home where there is jealousy for the same reason. Then again, as you already have heard, Joseph was a bright, clever lad whom most persons loved at sight. The present of the coat of many colors showed the brothers still more how much Jacob loved the boy, and this filled them with jealous anger and they determined to get rid of their brother, which they did."

"After doing that did they really sit down

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and eat their supper, Uncle Jim?" questioned Betty.

"Yes, so the Bible says."

"It doesn't seem possible," she murmured.

"Are there any further questions?" asked Uncle Jim, his eyes twinkling.

"Yes," spoke up Dick. "I should like to know why Joseph did not resist. Did he let the Ishmaelites carry him off without trying to get away from them, Father?"

"It seems so. But Joseph had a very good reason for not defending himself. He knew that, in the hands of so many, he was helpless, and that not even his own brothers would help him," said Uncle Jim.

"What happened to him after that, Uncle?" asked Betty.

"Well, Little Blue Eyes, that is another story," was Uncle Jim's laughing reply. "It is a story that I will tell you some other time, perhaps this afternoon. It is a story of many wonderful incidents, and — But there! I'll be telling you all about it if I keep on. Let me see — I think we will call the next story, 'The Dream Man, the Story of Joseph and Pharaoh.'"

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THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND PHARAOH

UNCLE JIM BURROUGHS leaned back in his chair after finishing his dinner, and drew a long breath of contentment.

"Margaret," he said, speaking to Betty's mother, "I think I will go out for a walk and —"

"Uncle!" cried Betty, slipping up behind Uncle Jim and clasping both arms about his neck.

"Well? What is it?" he asked.

"The Dream Man, Uncle. Surely you are not going out until after you have told us about Joseph and Pharaoh," persisted Betty.

Uncle Jim sighed deeply.

"Can't I have a moment's peace?" he demanded laughingly, as Dick also pounced upon him.

"Not one, single little moment," cried Betty.

"We want the Dream Man, Father," added Dick.

"Please, please, Uncle Jim," begged Betty.

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Uncle Jim glanced over at Mrs. Burroughs, and the two smiled into each other's eyes.

"Oh, very well, children. I will tell it right here at the table if you will sit down in your places and give me an opportunity to breathe. Afterwards Betty must help Mother with the dishes, and I'll take my walk while that is being done."

Betty and Dick quickly released their grip on Uncle Jim's neck and seated themselves at the table, as Mrs. Burroughs poured another cup of tea for herself and settled back to listen. Uncle Jim then took a sip of water and began:

"Let me see! Children, where did we leave Joseph?"

"On a camel," answered Betty quickly.

"Just so. He was on his way to Egypt with the Ishmaelites. He reached Egypt after many days' journey, and entered upon his new life there with Potiphar as his master. What a change that must have been for Joseph, and how he must have grieved, especially for the father who loved him so well. Joseph had never been so far from home before, which made his loneliness all the greater and his heart more sad.

"Potiphar, his master, soon saw that there was something fine and upright in the doings of the young shepherd from Canaan; he saw, too,

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that he was clever and clear-headed. And, as time went on, he gave him a great deal of authority, and let him have almost full charge of all his money and goods. But one day a false and cruel story was told to Potiphar about the youth he trusted. Potiphar believed it, and, in his anger, put Joseph into the King's prison, over which, as Pharaoh's chief officer, he had command.

“But, even in prison, Joseph made friends; the very keeper of the prison soon began to trust him, just as Potiphar had done. The lad was so fearless and honest and upright that everybody saw he followed the ways of the true God. And what interested all the Egyptians about him very much was that he could explain the meaning of dreams.

“Among his fellow-prisoners at one time were Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, who had both been put in prison for wrong-doing. They had strange dreams, one night, and Joseph told them what the dreams meant. That of the butler ended happily — Joseph told him it meant that the King would forgive him. And, surely enough, after a few days Pharaoh sent for his servant, pardoned him, and gave him back his old place in the royal household.

“Well, after a little time had passed, Pharaoh

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himself had a curious dream. He thought he saw seven fine fat kine feeding in a meadow. Then up out of the river came seven thin kine, looking, oh! so strange as they rose from the waters! And they ate all the fat kine up!"

"What are kine?" interrupted Betty.

"Cows," Uncle Jim informed her.

"And did a cow eat a cow?" wondered Dick.

"Yes. You will find it so written in the Bible.

"Pharaoh awoke, wondering. But by and by he fell asleep again. And again he dreamed. This time he saw seven ears of corn, yellow and full, upon one stalk. Then another stalk, with seven thin, wind-blasted ears, sprang up alongside. And the thin ears ate the good ears up.

"In the morning the King sent for his magicians and asked the meaning of his dreams; but they could not tell him. Then the chief butler remembered Joseph in the prison, and told Pharaoh about the Canaanite shepherd who could explain dreams. So the King sent for Joseph in haste. And Joseph stood before this mighty ruler of Egypt and explained what the dream meant.

"Both dreams are one," he said. "The seven kine and the seven ears of wheat each mean seven years. And by these dreams God has shown Pharaoh that there shall be, first, seven

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years of plentiful harvests in Egypt, and then seven years of famine. And the grievous famine shall eat up the time of plenty. God has shown Pharaoh the King what He means to do. So let the King look out for a discreet and wise man, and give him power to store up the harvests of the good years ready for the days of want.'

"Then Pharaoh answered Joseph: 'Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. See! I have set *thee* over all the land of Egypt!'

"He placed his own ring on Joseph's hand, put a gold chain round his neck, and gave him clothes to wear that were even more beautiful than the coat of many colors of long ago."

"Did Joseph read the dream right — did the things he promised, come to pass?" demanded Dick.

"Son, you don't wish me to tell the story backwards, do you?" answered Uncle Jim laughingly. "Your question will be answered soon if you will but give me an opportunity to tell the story."

"It must be wonderful to read dreams," breathed Betty. "How could Joseph do it?"

"If you have finished, I will go on with the story," finally announced Uncle Jim after a mo-

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ment of patient waiting, which in itself was a rebuke which was not lost on Dick and Betty. "As I was about to say, Joseph was given power to store up the harvests during the seven years of plenty, and, when the days of famine came, to give out the corn. And, in those sad and hungry days, a most strange and wonderful thing happened.

"Jacob, his old father, sent the brothers of Joseph down into Egypt to buy corn!

"You see, the famine was in the land of Canaan, too, but news came there that the Egyptians, under the wise guardianship of a good and discreet man, had stored a lot of corn and would sell it to other nations. So Jacob sent his ten sons to buy. But Benjamin, his youngest, who had taken the place of Joseph in his love, he would not trust to leave him.

"So the ten brothers came to Joseph in his palace, and bowed down before him, just as the sheaves of corn had bowed down in the dream, long, long ago, and begged him to sell them food.

"When Joseph saw them, the memory of Canaan, and of his shepherd-father, and of his brother Benjamin, rushed over him. And he had to turn away from them to weep. But the brothers had no idea that this rich and splendid

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man, dressed like an Egyptian, was the lad they had sold to the Ishmaelites in the days of old.

“So Joseph let them have some corn, although he pretended to mistrust them. He questioned them roughly, and heard that they had a younger brother called Benjamin. And he told them that next time they came they must bring Benjamin with them, or he would not sell them anything at all. Yet, when they went away, he had all their money put back into the tops of their sacks of corn.

“The famine was very bad in Canaan, and, once again, Jacob told his sons to go and buy food in Egypt. But they said it was of no use to go without Benjamin. At last, after long persuasion, and because Judah, one of the brothers, promised the boy should be safe, Jacob let his beloved youngest son go.

“So the brothers set off, with money and presents — balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds. And they took Benjamin with them.

“Joseph, when he heard that they were in Egypt again, had them brought to his own house, and prepared a banquet for them. Then Judah brought Benjamin and presented him to Joseph. After a minute or two of gazing upon his younger brother's face, Joseph was obliged to

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go away by himself again, and to weep for love and joy.

“Well, they all sat down to the banquet, and Joseph was at the master’s table, by himself. But he kept sending nice dishes to his brothers, who, to their great surprise, found themselves placed at table according to their ages. The nicest of all dishes were sent to Benjamin, and he had five times as much as any of his brothers. When the brothers went away with their corn, Joseph again had their money put into the tops of their sacks. But in Benjamin’s sack he put not only money, but his own beautiful silver cup.

“Then he sent servants after them, to say that his silver cup had been stolen, and that, whoever had hidden it in his sack, must come back and be his slave. And behold! the cup was found in the sack that belonged to Benjamin!

“So they all came back to Joseph’s house, and fell on their faces before him; and Judah begged that Benjamin should be released, and offered to become a slave in his stead.

“Then Joseph could bear it no longer. He sent all the Egyptians away, and told his brothers that he was Joseph, the son of their own father, Jacob or Israel. And he bade them fetch their father to Egypt, and promised that Pharaoh the

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King, his master, would be very good to them all.

“With great joy they went back to Canaan and brought Jacob, the old man, to see his son, who was alive and found again.

“So, once more, Jacob embraced Joseph, the son of his old age. And he was presented to the mighty Egyptian King, who bent low before the aged shepherd-king to receive his blessing. Pharaoh then gave the children of Jacob the land of Goshen, in which to feed their flocks. And this land, where the grass was sweet and good, with palm-trees waving above the corn-fields, and the river Nile flowing through the meadows, belonged to the Israelites and their children and grandchildren for many, many years.”

“What a wonderful man Joseph must have been!” cried Betty, her blue eyes deep and dark.

“I don’t think it was very nice of him, though, to put the silver cup in Benjamin’s sack, then have his brother taken as a thief. I really didn’t think it of Joseph,” objected Dick.

“He was wonderful just the same,” answered Betty with spirit. “I won’t let you say a single word against Joseph.”

“Joseph did this for a purpose. It was the fulfillment of his dream, Dick, and it was to im-

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press his brothers of his full forgiveness for the wrongs they had done to him," explained Uncle Jim. "You have heard how wonderfully he provided for them through King Pharaoh who gave the land of Goshen to the children of Jacob."

"Did King Pharaoh really see Joseph's father and brothers?" asked Betty.

"Yes, Blue Eyes. Did I not tell you so?"

"Pharaoh showed himself a pretty good sort after all, didn't he, Father?" suggested Dick.

"He surely did, but a Pharaoh who came after him was not a good man, and caused the descendants of Jacob a great deal of trouble and unhappiness."

"Tell us about it," purred Betty.

"That is all, children. I am going for a walk. Don't you two dare say story to me again to-day —"

"Oh, tell us about Moses, won't you?" begged Betty. "What shall we call the story?"

"Well," reflected Uncle Jim, stroking his chin, "I think we will call the next story, 'The Beautiful Princess, the Story of the Babe in the Bulrushes.'"

"Oh, goodie, goodie!" cried the little yellow-haired girl, dancing about and clapping her hands, and Uncle Jim strode out chuckling to himself.

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THE STORY OF THE BABE IN THE BULRUSHES

“**W**HERE is Uncle Jim?” cried Betty as she came running downstairs next morning, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.

Betty was late. After being called for breakfast she had turned over for just one wee little kitten-nap, such as she always loved to take after her mother had called her for breakfast.

“Oh, Mother dear, I am so sorry that I’m late. Where is Uncle Jim — and Dick?”

“I don’t know, Betty. I haven’t seen them since breakfast,” answered Mrs. Burroughs. “Uncle Jim said he guessed you didn’t care about ‘The Beautiful Princess’ this morning, so he and Dick went out, I don’t know where.”

“I am sorry, Mother dear,” she sobbed. “I didn’t mean to do it, but I just couldn’t help it. I know that Uncle Jim is trying to teach me a lesson, and I deserve it, too. But I did so wish to hear —”

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"To hear what?" questioned the laughing voice of Uncle Jim, as he stepped into the house, followed closely by Dick.

Betty was in his arms in an instant.

"I thought you were getting tired of my stories, Betty," said Uncle Jim.

"No, no," protested Betty.

"So I told Dick we wouldn't have any story this morning — There, there. Don't cry," he begged as Betty again gave way to tears. "Run along and get your breakfast. Then we will see what can be done," said Uncle Jim in the soothing, gentle tone that she so loved to hear.

"I don't wish any breakfast. I want 'The Beautiful Princess,'" pleaded the little yellow-haired girl. "Won't you please forgive me for being late, and tell us the story? You know you promised," she urged, tugging at a button-hole of his coat.

Uncle Jim pondered for a moment, stroking his grave and thoughtful face with one hand, the other toying lightly with the yellow curls of Betty's head.

"Go eat your breakfast; then we will meet 'The Beautiful Princess,'" he promised.

"You darling old Uncle," cried Betty, brushing her eyes as she ran to the breakfast room.

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Betty Burroughs did not take her usual time to eat that morning. A little later she bounced into the parlor, and announcing that she was ready, threw herself down at Uncle Jim's feet, her favorite position when listening to his wonderful stories of the Bible. There was a twinkle in Uncle Jim's eyes as he began his story.

"The good King Pharaoh that I have told you about," he said, "died, and then Joseph died, and after a long, long time another Pharaoh came to the throne of Egypt, who knew nothing about Joseph, and who became frightened when he saw what a great number of Israelites had grown up in Goshen, and how rich and clever they were, and how they worshiped a wonderful, powerful, unseen God, quite different from the gods of the Egyptians. And when the new Pharaoh began to think about this he called his ministers to him and told them of his fears.

"'Look at all these Hebrew men and women who call themselves the children of Israel,' he said. 'Who was Israel? I do not know. Do you?'

"The ministers looked at each other and shook their heads. They, also, had never heard of Joseph.

"'Well, whoever he was, he was not an Egyptian,' said the King. 'He was a stranger who

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came and settled here with his relatives, and they have grown into large families, and some day, if there is a war, they are quite likely to join the enemy, and become our masters. In order that they may never become our masters we must do the only wise thing and make them our servants."

" 'And how, oh King, shall we do this?' asked the ministers.

" 'By forcing them to help to build my two beautiful treasure-cities — Pithom and Raamses,' said the King. 'And by making them burn clay into bricks with which I may strengthen my great wall of Shur — the wall that keeps out those desert-princes and their followers, to whom I think the people of Israel must really belong. Go, and arrange with my other ministers that this shall be done!'

"So men called 'taskmasters' were put over the children of Israel, whose lives were made sadly cruel and hard. Once they had been the owners of everything in Goshen, and had lived happily and comfortably among their own belongings, reaping their fields of corn, gathering their crops of dates, and taking care of their flocks of sheep and goats. But now they were no longer their own masters; they had to work very

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hard for the Egyptians; and, if they worked slowly and unwillingly, were driven with whips. Very likely some of them had to live, too, in poor little villages built of clay, where their wives, who had once been able to keep servants, must have been most unhappy. Yet, in spite of this, such a lot of sturdy boys and girls were born in the poor little homes that Pharaoh said that the Israelites were still a danger, and that all the little boy-babies must be thrown into the river Nile, though the little girl-babies, who could never be soldiers when they were grown-up, might be allowed to live."

"Oh, Uncle! You don't mean that he intended to drown those helpless little babies, do you?" cried Betty.

"Yes. That was Pharaoh's intention, so that in a few years there would be no Israelite men capable of fighting," answered Uncle Jim.

"Oh, what a cruel King! How could he do such a terrible thing?" exclaimed the little girl.

"Yes. It was, indeed, a terrible thing for the Israelites, but they had no power to prevent it. Two kind women — one called Shiprah, which means beauty in English, and the other called Puah, which means splendor — tried to save the babies, but all the rest of the Egyptians were

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only too eager to please the cruel King. So whenever they heard of a little Israelite boy being born, they hurried to the father's home, dragged the poor mite from its mother, and took it away and threw it into the river. This was the last and most terrible trial of all. And almost every day the men of the Israelites, as they went to work past the sad women in the early morning, would try to shut their ears to the sobbing of the poor mothers inside the tents or houses, who had lost their sweet little baby-boys.

“Then one day an Israelite named Amram, who belonged to a family called Levi, married a woman of the same family or tribe whose name was Jochebed, which, some people think, means ‘God is glorious.’ Amram and Jochebed lived among their own people in Goshen, where the palms grew, perhaps in a tent, or perhaps in a little clay house. You could see the towers of the great city called Raamses not very far away, and see, too, the distant sails of the big boats that sailed up and down the river Nile as they do to-day. Such strange sails they were! Sometimes white, and sometimes red, and always sloping to one side as if they were blown by a high wind. Near the river were the waving



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fields of barley, and overhead was the hot, wide, blue sky.

“Well, as time went on, a little daughter was born to Amram and Jochebed, whom they called Miriam. She grew up into a very clever and sensible little girl, but she must always have been rather sad, for she would see her father go off every morning to work for the Egyptians, while all round her in the sorrowful homes were the poor mothers whose boy-babies had been snatched from them and thrown into the cruel waters of the Nile. And then at last, one day, Jochebed had a little boy-baby herself!

“He was such a beautiful baby — soft and fat and round, with a sort of sun-burned look all over his satiny skin, and a lot of little curls on his head, and eyes like diamonds.

“How Miriam loved the baby! How terrified she was lest he should be taken from them — how thankful and glad when Jochebed said she was going to save the beautiful child if she possibly could. Earnestly Miriam helped her mother to hide the baby; and, for three months, nobody guessed that he was in the little house. Perhaps the neighbors, who were Israelites, suspected something, but they never told. And he grew big and strong and lovelier than ever. And

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then one day the mother told Miriam that she was afraid they could not hide him any more, and would have to trust him entirely to the care of God.

“Now, in the land of Egypt, even in these days, the peasant women are able to swim across the Nile when they want to go from one side to the other. And, if a mother has to take her baby with her, she puts the little one into a kind of basket made of bulrushes and smeared with a sort of gum to keep out the water. Then she shuts the lid very carefully, slides the basket into the river, and swims across, pushing the basket in front of her, for all the world like a safe and cosy little boat.”

“Was that not a risky thing to do, Father?” asked Dick. “I don’t see how the babies could help swallowing a good deal of water. I can’t even swim without getting a lot of it in my mouth.”

“Don’t you understand, Dick? The basket floated on the surface of the river. If it was properly gummed, not a drop of water could reach the baby, who, we may suppose, cooed and played with his little brown toes all the way across the blue waters of the great river. I’ll warrant, Betty, that your big father gets wetter in his big

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ship every time he crosses the ocean," chuckled Uncle Jim.

"I don't like to think of it any more than I like to think of those dear little babies," murmured Betty.

"So Jochebed took one of these baskets — arks, they are called" — resumed Uncle Jim, "and put her baby into it, and Miriam helped her to carry it down the sandy road and through the corn-fields and rice-fields, until they came to the river's edge. Big tall reeds and grasses grew there, waving softly in the light of the afternoon sun. And, although the Bible does not describe it, we know that, just by the side of the water, was a specially prepared pool, with shady trees and floating lilies, in which the princess, who was Pharaoh's daughter, used to come and bathe. It was close to this royal pool that Jochebed meant to leave the baby; and very quietly she put the basket down on the edge of the water among the waving reeds, then, with one long last look at the little one, she shut the lid and turned away.

"Miriam stayed behind to watch, while Jochebed walked steadily homewards with her eyes fixed on the sky. Somehow she knew that it was God who had shown her what to do with the baby, and who would send somebody

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to take care of him, so that he should come to no harm.

“Miriam, meanwhile, hidden among the taller rushes, listened earnestly lest the baby should cry. But the baby was asleep. The sun sank lower and lower, and still the baby slept on. Then there came the sound of horses, and wheels, and men calling to the peasants to keep out of the way. Presently a sort of quietness fell, and women’s laughter and voices floated over the water, and Miriam, peeping out, saw the Egyptian princess come down with her maidens to bathe in the royal pool, in the cool of the evening.

“As Miriam watched, she saw the princess begin to take off her beautiful robes and hand them to her attendants, some of whom remained near, while others walked along the bank. All at once the princess caught sight of the basket, and stopped undressing, in amazement. And she called to one of her maidens to bring the basket to her.

“When it was brought, and the lid lifted, the baby woke. He saw strange faces round him, instead of those of Miriam and his mother, and he began to cry. The princess looked at him very pitifully and said:

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“ ‘This is one of the Hebrew babies — he belongs to the children of Israel.’

“As she said this she noticed that a little eager anxious girl had crept up and was watching her earnestly. The princess, who was kind and good, smiled at the little girl, and then lifted the baby into her own arms.

“ ‘I think I shall have to adopt him,’ she went on. ‘But who will nurse him for me, if I do? I cannot take him home with me — but somehow I cannot leave him here.’

“Then Miriam, breathless and eager-eyed, came a little closer.

“ ‘Shall I go and find a nurse among the Hebrew women?’ she asked very earnestly. ‘Some one who will nurse the baby for you?’

“The princess smiled again, and said, ‘Go.’ And she stayed with the baby in her arms until Miriam hurried back, bringing with her Jochebed herself!

“Jochebed’s face was very happy and very quiet. She said nothing, but looked from the baby to the princess, and back from the princess to the baby. And then Pharaoh’s daughter said:

“ ‘Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.’

“Jochebed bent very low before the princess,

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and took her own baby back into her arms. Then she and Miriam and the baby went home together.

“So now they had no need to hide the little boy, for everybody knew that he was the adopted child of the daughter of the King.

“When he grew old enough to do without his mother’s daily care, Jochebed took him one day to show the princess what a fine lad he had become. Then Pharaoh’s daughter said he must be left with her altogether, to live now at the King’s palace, and to be like a son to her. And she said:

“‘I will call him Moses, which means “drawn out,” because I drew him out of the water.’

“So Moses grew up in the very same wonderful King’s palace that had sheltered Joseph years ago. When he became a man he saved the children of Israel from the cruel Egyptian kings.”

“Pharaoh’s daughter must have been a very nice girl or she never would have gone to the bother of rescuing Moses from the rushes,” declared Betty admiringly as Uncle Jim came to the end of his story. “What a beautiful story it is, Uncle Jim!”

“Did the princess tell her father, the King, that she had adopted Moses?” questioned Dick.

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“The Bible does not say so, but being such a lovely girl she undoubtedly did tell him, and in adopting Moses she not only saved the baby’s life, but also saved to the world a wonderful man, children. Of course it was God in his great wisdom who placed Moses in her hands.”

“Was it because Moses had been adopted by the King’s daughter, that he was not cast into the Nile?” asked Betty.

“Yes. Of course. Cruel as they were, the Egyptians dared not harm the son of the King’s daughter, even if he were only an adopted son,” replied Uncle Jim. “Some other time I will tell you more about this great man.”

“Tell us now,” insisted Betty.

Uncle Jim shook his head.

“Next time, Betty dear. Then I will tell you about ‘The River of Blood, the Story of Many Miracles,’ ” he said.

THE RIVER OF BLOOD

THE STORY OF MANY MIRACLES

IT was not until the next day that Uncle Jim consented to tell the story that he had promised. He declared that, at the rate he had been going, he soon would have no more stories to tell. In that event he said he would have to go home before he was really ready to do so.

"I don't understand," wondered Betty, regarding him with wide-open eyes.

"Father means that, were he to stay here without telling us Bible stories, he wouldn't get a minute's rest," said Dick laughingly. "He is right, too, isn't he, Betty?"

Betty agreed with a nod.

"It doesn't seem quite fair for you two children to take up so much of Uncle Jim's time," spoke up Mrs. Burroughs. "I am sure he must get quite weary of so much story-telling."

"That is only make-believe, Auntie," declared Dick. "Father just loves to tell us the wonderful Bible stories. He would be unhappy if he

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thought we did not care about them, wouldn't you, Father?"

"Say yes, you dear, beautiful old Uncle Jim," teased Betty, running caressing fingers through Uncle Jim's graying hair.

"Yes, yes," agreed Uncle Jim with a laugh, in which Mrs. Burroughs joined heartily. "I think I should have to agree to almost anything that you children demanded. We will now begin with the story. 'The River of Blood,' it is called. 'The Story of Many Miracles.' Do you children know what it is about?" he asked, gazing into the expectant faces of Betty and Dick.

Both children shook their heads.

"It is to be about Moses," he told them.

"Goodie!" cried Betty. "I do so want to hear more about that wonderful baby."

"At the time this story begins, Moses was no longer a baby; he was a full-grown man," Uncle Jim informed them.

"It was many years after the incidents related in yesterday's story, that Moses might have been seen standing at the foot of a great mountain that rose out of the golden sands of the desert into the deep blue of the Eastern sky. Stretches of green pasture lay among the bare places; and here and there might be seen bushes

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of wild white broom. Little shepherd-boys wandered about with flocks of sheep, and plucked the broom-flowers to feed the ewes and lambs. The sheep belonged to Jethro, the Priest of Midian, whose daughter Moses had married. For Moses had been obliged to flee from Pharaoh's palace long, long ago. He had killed a man who was ill-treating one of the poor, oppressed Israelites, and he had been compelled to leave Egypt.

"So Moses, now the chief shepherd of Jethro's sheep, stood a little way off from the flock, his long shepherd's rod, or wand, in his hand. He was watching a strange sight. Not far from where he stood a thorny bush of pale acacia flowers was glowing with a great, clear, shining flame. Yet not a twig was scorched, nor did any ashes fall to the ground. The bunches of blossom still lay delicately upon the spiked branches, fragrant and creamy-white, and the leaves made a pattern of golden green. How beautiful the flowers and foliage must have looked with the light of the mysterious flame glowing within the very heart of the little tree.

"While Moses wondered, a voice came from the brightness, and bade him take off his shoes, for he stood on holy ground. So Moses knew that he was in the presence of God.

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“Then the voice gave a message of comfort for the sad Israelites in Egypt, and told Moses of a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who, God had promised, should be the fathers of a great nation. ‘They knew me by another name,’ said the voice that spoke in the shining flame, ‘but, from now, they shall know me as, *I am that I am*. Go and bring their children to me in this holy mountain, and tell them that Jehovah hath sent you to deliver them.’

“But Moses was afraid and said: ‘Behold, they will not hearken unto me.’

“The voice answered: ‘What is that in thine hand?’

“Moses said: ‘A rod!’

“Then the voice came clear again from the flame: ‘Cast it upon the ground!’

“Moses obeyed, and lo! the shepherd’s staff turned into a serpent. Moses started out of its way in terror. But the voice said: ‘Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail!’

“When Moses did so, the twisting serpent changed back into a wand again. And God told him to take his brother Aaron to help him, and to go and show this wonderful miracle to the Israelites and to Pharaoh, and say that the

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Lord Jehovah claimed the people of Israel for His own.

“So Moses set out for Egypt, with the wand of God in his hand.”

“I should think Moses would have been afraid to have the rod with him,” observed Dick.

“Just looking at it would have scared me very much,” agreed Betty.

“Not if you possessed faith and full trust in God,” reminded Uncle Jim. “Moses had faith — a great and wonderful faith — a faith something like that which you children have in your own parents. Think of that and you will understand the beautiful love and faith of the believers of those ancient days. But we are getting away from our story.

“One day, soon afterwards, the King of Egypt, seated on his throne in his splendid palace — a throne with golden serpents to ornament it — was told that two shepherds from the desert wished to speak to him; and he allowed them to be shown into his presence. They came in gravely; and one held a long rod, which Pharaoh thought was only the usual staff carried by a shepherd as he led his sheep. The King looked coldly and curiously at the two men, and inquired their business.

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“Then one of them in low, grave tones rebuked Pharaoh for keeping the children of Israel in bondage, and, in the name of the Lord Jehovah who had spoken from the holy mountain, commanded the King to set the people free, that they might go and worship this great God in the wilderness.

“Pharaoh stared at the two scornfully and said:

“‘Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go!’

“So Moses and his brother Aaron went silently away.

“A second time they came into Pharaoh’s presence. Now it was Aaron who held the shepherd’s rod quietly in his fingers. Once more they demanded the freedom of the people of Israel in the name of Jehovah, the Lord God.

“The monarch frowned angrily. Then, with a mocking laugh, he bade them prove the might of their God by working a miracle. For the King did not believe that the two shepherds had any power in their hands at all.

“Silently Aaron lifted the long, slender staff, and flung it, straight and slim, at Pharaoh’s feet. As it fell, it writhed and twisted in the air; the

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sun shone on it and showed it gleaming with scales. It dropped to the ground in the form of a live serpent, that lifted its head and hissed angrily at Pharaoh, and at the golden snakes that adorned his throne.

“Pharaoh and his servants started back from the serpent, just as Moses had done by the burning bush. But the King had at his court clever conjurers and magicians who could bring snakes out of empty bags, and from corners of the royal rooms, in the same way that the snake-charmers in Eastern countries do to-day. The King sent for the conjurers, and they all turned their enchanters’ wands into big snakes, that twisted and crawled, with Aaron’s, upon the palace floor.

“Then an astonishing thing happened. Aaron’s serpent lifted its big flat head, opened its hissing mouth, and swallowed the magicians’ serpents one by one. When Aaron lifted the great snake by the tail, it turned quietly into a rod again.

“Still Pharaoh would not obey the message of God. And once more Moses and Aaron went out from the palace.”

“Father, what became of the snakes that Aaron’s rod swallowed?” asked Dick.

“That I can’t say, Son. It was a remarkable

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miracle, but, as you know, it failed to convince the King. That his own magicians had suddenly been given marvelous powers, too, however, did amaze him for the moment, as you have already learned," replied Uncle Jim.

"Yes, but how was it, Father, that the King's magicians were able to do all these things just as well as Aaron and Moses could?" wondered Dick.

"They could not of themselves, Son. They did not possess the power, but God gave them the power to do miracles up to a certain point, I suppose, to make more marked the superior power possessed by Moses and Aaron. We will now go on with our story.

"The next day the proud King went down to the river in the rose-colored dawn. Very likely he went there in order to worship the god of the river, in whom the Egyptians believed; for, morning after morning, he always made his way to the same spot. There, standing by the river's brink in the clear light of the risen sun, was the shepherd from the wilderness, with his brother Aaron, holding high the rod of God.

"As Pharaoh came up to them, they stretched the rod over the river, where Pharaoh's god was believed to be all-powerful. They smote the

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waters in the sight of the King and all his servants; the sunlit ripples crimsoned, and the stream grew lurid and red. The rod of God had turned the waters of the river into blood.

“Pharaoh and his servants stared at the crimson waters just as they had stared at the gleaming serpent. Then the King asked his magicians if they, too, could not turn water into blood. They showed him that they could, so again Pharaoh refused to believe in the power of the God of the Israelites.

“Then Moses and Aaron, with their marvelous rod, brought up hundreds and hundreds of frogs from the river. The magicians of Pharaoh did the same. But Pharaoh now grew frightened, not only at what the shepherds could do, but also at the strange new powers of his own conjurers. He begged Moses to stop the frogs from coming out of the river in their thousands; Moses did so, and all the other frogs began to die. Then, when Pharaoh saw that no more frogs were coming, he forgot his fear, and said that, after all, he would *not* let the people go.

“Then Aaron stretched out the rod again, and struck it down upon the dust of the hot and sandy land. The dust became, as it were, alive with myriads of insects, so that the magicians,

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who could show no more enchantments, were as startled as Pharaoh himself.

“Even then Pharaoh would not believe. He grew sullen and angry, and still refused to let the people go. So, morning after morning, Moses and Aaron waited for him as he came down to the river to worship; and, morning after morning, one of them stretched out the rod, and brought some strange and terrible thing to pass. At last, God said He would, Himself, pass through the land of Egypt about midnight, and would smite with death the first-born in every house that was not marked with the blood of lambs killed for the last supper that the Hebrews would ever eat in Egypt. By the blood on the door-posts God would, He said, know that His faithful people were within, and would not suffer the destroyer to enter. And, ever afterwards, they were, on a certain day, to observe the same Passover feast.

“The Israelites did exactly as God told them, and ate the Passover Lamb as they stood ready for their journey. And God passed through the land as He had said. Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron in the very middle of the night, while all the Egyptians wept for their first-born, and told them to hasten the Israelites away. ‘Get you forth,’ he cried, ‘go and serve the Lord

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as ye have said: Take your flocks and herds and be gone! ’

“All the men and women of the Egyptians echoed Pharaoh’s cry, and loaded the Israelites with gifts — jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and fine clothing.

“In this manner the Israelites went away from the land of Goshen, and set out across the desert of Shur. As they traveled they saw always in front of them a pillar of cloud that streamed up from the earth to the sky. When night fell, a glow of redness showed in the high column of gray mist; and, as the darkness deepened, it became a pillar of fire. This was the sign of the Lord Jehovah, by which He showed them the way to go. And so, men, women and children, they set off for the Holy Mountain, that they might spread their tents, and learn the teachings of the Great God, among the dark rocks and the feathery tamarisk shrubs.

“Was it real blood that Aaron turned the river into?” asked Dick, as his father finished.

“So the Bible tells us, Son. When they smote the waters with the rod of God the river instantly became blood. But, as you already know, Pharaoh was still not convinced, and still refused to let the children of Israel go.”

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"He did let them go at last, though," reminded Dick.

"Yes, but not until after God smote the first-born," agreed Uncle Jim.

"That seems a terrible thing to do," murmured Betty. "Was there no other way, Uncle Jim?"

"God's way is always the best way, my dear. God was patient with Pharaoh, as you know, very patient, but Pharaoh defied Him. It was not until every other effort had failed, that God's all-powerful hand descended upon the Egyptians. You may well believe that, after this punishment, Pharaoh's people were glad to be rid of the Israelites."

"There is one question that I should like to ask, Father."

"Yes, Dick?"

"After smiting the first-born of the Egyptians that one time, did God stop smiting or did he keep it up?"

"No. It was not necessary for him to continue it, Son."

"And not one Israelite was slain by mistake that night?" persisted Dick.

"Not so far as the Bible records. It is probable that every Israelite home that night was

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marked with the blood of a slain lamb, as God had directed. This saved the Israelite homes from the vengeance of the Lord," Uncle Jim replied.

"I don't wonder they were glad to have the Israelites hurry away," observed Betty thoughtfully. "But, Uncle Jim, the end of the story is so beautiful that it makes me forget all the sad things in it. I wish you would tell us more about Moses. Will you?"

Uncle Jim promised that he would, adding that the next would be entitled, "The Tent of God, the Story of Many Mysteries."

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THE STORY OF MANY MYSTERIES

“**I** WISH you children would read about Moses in the Bible and learn all about the wonderful things that God gave him the power to do,” said Uncle Jim in beginning his next story. “Perhaps the people of those times were so used to mysteries, miracles and wonder-working, that they were not so much impressed as one would think. But, children, just think what a tremendous thing it would be were those wonders and miracles to be worked before our eyes to-day. Why, the whole world would be shaken to its very foundation.”

“I think the world would be frightened,” suggested Dick.

“We have miracles to-day,” Mrs. Burroughs reminded the children, as she entered the room to listen to the next story.

“Do we, really, Mother?” wondered Betty, her eyes opening widely.

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"Mother is right," spoke up Uncle Jim. "How the plants and trees bud and leaf and bloom, how the planets of the universe pursue their course in the heavens, and how all nature performs its work in other directions, are really miracles beyond full understanding. If you will but look about you, you will see miracles accomplished everywhere."

Dick said that he had never thought of it in that way, and suggested that Uncle Jim take them all out for a walk in the country next day.

"We will go miracle-hunting," added Dick.

"Oh, won't that be perfectly wonderful!" cried Betty.

Mrs. Burroughs said it would be, and announced her intention of going with them.

"Come, children. We must get on with our story," urged Uncle Jim briskly. "Then you must ask me for no more to-day."

"You will tell us about Moses and his magic wand, too, won't you, Uncle Jim?" Betty ventured to ask.

"If you will give me a chance to do so, I will," he promised laughingly. "Please listen and be quiet," he added.

"Moses," began Uncle Jim, "did many more wonders with the wand of God as he led the people of Israel towards the Holy Mountain.

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You must read about all these things in the Bible — how, by the power of the wonderful rod, the seas were divided so that the Israelites might pass through them; and how Pharaoh, who changed his mind and sent soldiers after them with horses and chariots, lost all his army in the waves. But the Israelites traveled safely onwards and set up their tents all round about the foot of the mountain. Then God called to Moses from the shining cloud that hung over the very top. Moses went into the cloud, and disappeared from the sight of the awed and wondering people below.

“There, in the middle of the bright cloud, the Lord Jehovah told Moses to make a special tent for His glory among the tents of the people themselves, that He might come down to them from the mountain, and be near them, and dwell with them. The children of Israel were to bring offerings for the Tent of God from the treasures that had been brought by them from Egypt — gold and silver and brass; blue and purple and scarlet; fine linen and goats’ hair; rams’ skins dyed red, and fragrant wood; oil for the light; spices for the anointing, and sweet incense; and precious stones for the High Priest to wear upon his breast.

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“God promised Moses that He would put great wisdom into the heart of a man called Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, to teach him how to turn all these offerings into beautiful things for the Tent of God. The scarlet and purple and blue were to be made into lovely curtains and hangings; the brass and silver into delicate ornaments; and the pure gold was, among other things, for a holy casket, with the Mercy-Seat above it, guarded by two bright angels stretching out their shining wings.

“God also promised that He would come down and rest upon the golden Mercy-Seat between the wings of the bright angels, and teach Moses and the children of Israel the things He desired them to learn. So this beautiful casket, or Ark, as it was called, was to be kept in a holy place within many-colored curtains, all embroidered with angels in scarlet and blue. Before the last curtain, which hung in front of the Ark, was to be set a golden candlestick, with seven branches made like almond-boughs in blossom, which were to hold up seven lamps of shining flame. The very shapes of the candlesticks were shown to Moses, as he stood in the glory of Jehovah’s Mountain.”

“Isn’t that perfectly wonderful?” interrupted

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Betty. "I don't believe there ever was another tent in the world like that."

Uncle Jim tried to frown, but his attempt turned to a smile, and he began again:

"Then Bezaleel, and another Israelite called Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man and wise-hearted woman in the camp under the Holy Mountain, set to work to make the Tent of God. The wise-hearted women spun thread, and wove cloth, and did fine needlework, and gave their ear-rings and ornaments to Aholiab and Bezaleel. And the wise-hearted men brought skins of badgers and goats, and hewed long planks of Shittim wood, which was the wood of the acacia-tree, which is of the same genus as the bush from which Jehovah's voice had first spoken to Moses out of the flame. And so they all worked together for the glory and the beauty of the Tent of God. Was that not a work of love, Betty?"

"Oh, yes," cried the little girl. "How wonderful it must have been to those women to make a real tent for God. Did He really live in it, Uncle Jim?"

"Yes, dear. That was the purpose of it so that God might come down to them from the mountain to be near them, as I have already told you.

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“When it was finished, Moses set the Tent up at the foot of the Holy Mountain, and all the people stood, watching. While they watched, a wonderful thing happened. The bright cloud on the mountain began to move slowly down the steep sides, over the white broom-bushes, and the pretty acacia-flowers. It floated right up to where the Tent stood, and then hung over it, shining more beautifully than ever. So Moses and all the people knew that Jehovah had come down, in the beautiful cloud, to the lovely Tent that they had made for Him.

“Three things were placed in the big golden casket that they called the Ark. First—the Tables of the Law, which were the Ten Commandments, carved in deep-cut letters upon two tablets of stone, and given by God to Moses for all the people to learn and to obey. The second was a little vase of manna. And to know what manna was we must go back a little way to the time before God’s wonderful Tent was finished.

“You see, there were no fields of wheat or oats or barley round about the foot of the Mountain, where the camp of the children of Israel was spread. And the people, who had lived so long in Egypt, did not know how to find food in the great wilderness that stretched around. So they

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went to Moses, and told him that if he did not find food for them they must surely die. But Moses rebuked them for their want of trust, and said that, in the very evening and the morning that were coming, they should see for themselves the loving-kindness of God.

“So, in the evening, when the purple dusk covered the desert with its mantle, and the sky flushed red in the west, the little brown quails of the wilderness came up and covered the camp; and the people killed and ate them. All through the night the Mountain glowed with glory, as if some miracle were going to happen at the break of day. Down among the rocks, in the open spaces between the tents, the dew fell much more heavily than usual. And, when the people woke, they saw that all about the camp the ground was like silver with a thousand, thousand beads of brightness which sparkled for a few minutes in the sunshine, and then dried up with the warmth of the morning. But where the dew had lain the people saw a lot of small round things covering the face of the wilderness, and making the sand-dunes quite white, as if the hoar frosts of winter were upon them.

“The people, wondering, asked each other what it could be that covered the face of the

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ground. And they said, 'It is a gift! It is an unknown thing! "Manna" must be its name.'

"But Moses, coming into the midst of them through the morning light, said: 'This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.'

"He told everybody, men and women and children, that they must gather the manna from the ground. So they brought out their jars and basins, and filled them with the wonderful new food. And then it was divided quite fairly among them. When the manna was made into cakes it tasted like wafers mixed with honey."

"Was it really bread, Father?" asked Dick.

"It was the Lord's bread, but what it really was we do not know. The nearest we can come to describing it is, as I have already said, 'it tasted like wafers mixed with honey.'"

Dick said he could easily imagine how eagerly the people ate of this wonderful food.

"So, morning after morning, during the years that they lived in the wilderness, the people of Israel gathered manna for their daily bread, in the early coolness of the dawn," resumed Uncle Jim. "But, as soon as the noontide heats came, the white, mysterious food vanished like little flakes of snow in the sunshine. On the sixth morning of each week the people gathered twice

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as much, for on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there was none.

“It was in memory of this that the vase of manna was put into the golden Ark with the Tables of the Law. And the third thing that was carefully laid there was Aaron’s rod.

“It was not the same as the holy wand that Moses and Aaron had carried into the presence of Pharaoh; but it was fresh-cut, with eleven others, from the trees. For God told His people that, out of the twelve tribes of Israel, each of which was descended from one of Jacob’s sons, He would choose a special family from whom the high-priests for His service were to be drawn. So the prince of each tribe was to give Moses a tree-branch, on which the name of the tribe was to be written, in order that everybody might know to whom each tree-branch belonged.

“So Moses stood at the door of the Tent of God, and, one by one, the princes came up, and gave him their long, straight branches, clearly written with their names. Moses took the wands into the Tabernacle, passed through the embroidered curtains and stood before the shining Ark. And there he laid the wands of the twelve princes down.

“So all night the wands lay in the Holy Place

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of God. And in the morning Moses went in and brought them out.

“As he held them up to the gaze of the twelve princes and their people, everybody saw that one of the tree-branches had budded and brought forth green leaves and little tender blossoms, and yielded almonds. It was the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, that had budded in the night, in answer to the whisper of God.”

“What did that mean, Father?” asked Dick. “It must have meant something very wonderful to the people.”

“It did, Son. It meant that Aaron and his sons were chosen high-priests forever. As a token, the almond-bough was laid up in the golden Ark, with the little vase of manna and the Tablets of the Law.

“The Ark was called ‘The Ark of the Covenant’ because the Tablets, which, as you know, had the Ten Commandments engraved upon them, were a sort of promise, or covenant, between the Lord Jehovah and the people whom He had saved and blessed. If they kept His laws, then He, in return, would make them a great nation. So they were to follow Moses to a land where the goats gave as much sweet milk as anyone wanted, and where the wild bees made

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honey from the mountain flowers, the country where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived long, long ago.

“But, before the Israelites could enter that country, they had many things to learn in the wilderness, for they often, by disobedience, showed themselves unworthy of their great destiny as the chosen people of God. So for forty years they journeyed to and fro in the wilderness. Boys grew up to manhood, and young men became old men; in fact, scarcely any of those who had escaped from the bondage of Pharaoh lived to enter the Promised Land when their children did so. But wherever they stayed, the Holy Tent was always set up in their camps, and always, when they prayed to Jehovah, the beautiful cloud came down to the Mercy-Seat, and shone between the golden angels of the Ark.”

“What a beautiful story!” cried Betty as Uncle Jim finished his narrative. “It does seem queer, though, to think that a rod should have leaves and blossoms and grow almonds.”

“Why not, Betty? You can cut a willow stick, thrust it into the ground, and in time it will grow, leaves will appear on it, and one day it will turn into a beautiful tree. The difference is

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that God performed the miracle of making the rod bloom and bear in a single night — ”

“ It bloomed in answer to the whisper of God,” added Dick impressively.

“ Exactly so, Son,” agreed Dick’s father.

“ Does anyone know what became of the Ark of the Covenant? ” asked Dick.

“ I believe that it finally disappeared. It was more than once stolen by unbelievers, but bad luck always followed the theft of it. Finally, however, it disappeared forever so far as any information regarding it is found in the Bible. Now this is enough for to-day, children,” said Uncle Jim. “ I will next tell you about ‘ Ruth the Gleaner, the Sweet Story of the Daughter of the Moabites.’ ”

“ Goodie, goodie,” cried Betty. “ I just love Ruth.”

RUTH THE GLEANER

THE SWEET STORY OF THE DAUGHTER
OF THE MOABITES

IT was the eagerly looked-forward-to miracle hunt that filled the thoughts of Dick and Betty next morning, and right after breakfast they fairly dragged Uncle Jim out of the house. Mrs. Burroughs was so eager to be one of the party that she left her breakfast dishes on the table, a most unusual thing for such a fine house-keeper to do.

The little party strolled across fields of nodding daisies and fragrant meadows of clover. As the children cried out delightedly at some wondrous work of nature, from the sweet-scented clover to the yellow sunflower that turned its nodding face towards the morning sun, Uncle Jim showed them the miracle in each.

"How beautiful it all has been, dear Uncle Jim," said Betty when they finally sank down on the steps of the Burroughs home.

III

8 — *Uncle Jim's Stories from Old Testament.*

RUTH THE GLEANER

"Yes," agreed Dick. "I never even dreamed that there were so many miracles all about us. Why, some of them are just as wonderful as the Rod of Moses, the rod that turned into a blooming tree over night."

"I shall have to tell the girls of our Sunday-school class all about it next Sunday," cried Betty brightly. "Won't they be surprised when they hear that I have seen real miracles?"

"Some day soon I will show you others," promised Uncle Jim. "I believe we were to have a story this morning, were we not?"

"Yes, yes!" cried the children.

"What was it that I promised to tell you?"

"About Ruth the Gleaner," spoke up Betty quickly.

"The Story of the Daughter of the Moabites," added Dick.

Uncle Jim's eyes glowed with approval.

"Come up on the porch," he said. "It is getting too hot out here."

After the happy little family were comfortably seated, Uncle Jim began:

"You have learned that the Children of Israel, because of their disobedience, were made to wander in the wilderness for forty years," he said.

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“When the Children of Israel had learned to obey and follow the laws that Moses taught them, they were allowed to leave the wilderness, and to come into Canaan, the Promised Land. It must have changed from what it was like in the days of Jacob; for many great cities had been built by foreign kings among the mountains where once only the olive and fig trees had spread their branches and the small wild deer had leaped among the rocks. But it was always a fair and beautiful country; and, after long wars, the Children of Israel settled in the quiet valleys, and built villages on the lower slopes of the hills. Moses was dead, but a great captain called Joshua led them, and helped them to conquer the foreign kings. And the people set up the beautiful Tent of Jehovah at a place called Shiloh, quite near the spot where Joseph had been sold to the Ishmaelites several hundred years before.

“Bethlehem was one of the villages where the Children of Israel settled. After a time, there was a bad famine there, and no one had anything to eat; so many people left and went to settle in places where the harvests had been good. Among these people was a man called Elimelech, who went away with his wife, Naomi, and his two sons. They traveled a long way from Bethle-

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hem, beyond the wild deserted salt lake that is called the Dead Sea, into the land of Moab, where the hills in the distance look all red and strange. It was on one of these hills that Moses was buried. Elimelech settled there among the Moabites, and his two sons married two young Moabite girls, called Orpah and Ruth. But before either of these young wives had any children, the sons of Naomi died. As Elimelech was dead also, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were left quite alone in the world.

“Naomi longed for her own beautiful country of Canaan, and did not want to die in the strange land of Moab. She heard, too, that the Lord had been merciful to Bethlehem again, and that once more the people had corn and wine and oil. So she left the place where she lived in Moab and set out for her old home. Orpah and Ruth went with her. But Naomi did not think that these daughters of the Moabites could be happy in leaving their own people. So she begged them to turn back.

“‘Go,’ she said, ‘return each to her mother’s house. And may the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me!’

“She kissed them tenderly and they all wept

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at the thought of parting. Still Naomi urged them to turn back.

“ ‘Turn again, my daughters, go your ways!’ she repeated, ‘I am an old woman. I only go to the land of my fathers to spend my last days among my own people!’ And so, at last, kissing her mother-in-law, and weeping, Orpah turned back.

“But Ruth would not leave Naomi, nor let her continue her journey alone.

“ ‘Whither thou goest I will go!’ she said.

‘Where thou lodgest I will lodge! Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God! Where thou diest will I die and there will I be buried! The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me!’

“Wasn’t that wonderful of Ruth?” cried Betty with enthusiasm.

“I think it also very wonderful of Naomi,” interposed Mrs. Burroughs, who seldom took any part in the discussion of Uncle Jim’s stories. She preferred to listen and enjoy the stories as well as the eagerness of Betty and Dick.

Dick averred that he did not think very much of the way Orpah left her mother-in-law.

“Ruth was the loyal one,” ventured Betty.

“But, Uncle, why didn’t Orpah stay?”

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“Because Naomi succeeded in convincing Orpah that for her to go meant that she would be a stranger in a strange land. Then again, she persuaded Orpah that it was her duty to go back and settle down among her own kindred. Ruth was not so readily turned from her purpose. Some might call her stubborn. No doubt they would in these days, but it was not stubbornness, children. Ruth gave up family and friends, religion and country, choosing poverty and life among strangers for love of Naomi and belief in Naomi’s God. Was not that a great and beautiful thing to do?”

“Yes,” answered Dick and Betty together.

“To get on with our story,” resumed Uncle Jim.

“When Naomi saw Ruth’s steadfastness, she no longer tried to persuade her to turn back. And they came, like mother and daughter, to Bethlehem. There was, oh! such excitement in the little village as the people recognized Elimelech’s wife. They said, ‘Is this Naomi?’ But she answered sadly, ‘Nay, do not call me Naomi, but Mara, which means bitterness! For the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me!’

“Because, you see, except for sweet and faithful Ruth, Naomi had nobody near to her in the

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wide world, and, what grieved her most of all, no little grandchildren to carry on her husband's and her dead sons' name.

"In this sad way, Naomi and Ruth came back to the plains and fields of Bethlehem, just when all the people of the country-side were about to bring home the harvest. Among these folk were many kinsmen of Naomi's husband, and one of them, who was called Boaz, owned a great part of the land where the harvest was being gathered. Ruth asked Naomi if she might go and glean after the reapers. You know gleaners are the poor women and children who used to go into the fields of the rich farmers, and, following behind the reapers, gather up the long stalks of wheat, or barley, or oats, that the men let fall. In this way Ruth thought that she could get a little food for Naomi and herself.

"So, when Naomi said, 'Yes,' Ruth went down the road to the fields, where the bearded, golden grain bent and rustled under the blue harvest-skies. All about her were the reapers, cutting down the yellow stalks with their gleaming sickles, and binding them into long sheaves."

"The same kind of sheaves that stood up in Joseph's dream, Uncle?" interrupted Betty.

"Yes. I am pleased that you remember.

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“It so happened that Ruth went to a field belonging to Naomi’s kinsman, Boaz, though she did not know this at the time. Presently Boaz came and stood among the busy workers, and gave them greeting.

“‘The Lord be with you,’ said Boaz. And they answered, ‘The Lord bless thee.’

“Then Boaz saw Ruth, a little way off, wearing the dress of her native land of Moab. And he asked the reapers who she was. When they told him he went away over the stubble, and spoke to her gently, telling her to go on gleaning in his field, for his servants would be kind to her, and would give her water whenever she was thirsty. When she bent humbly before him, and asked how it was he was so kind to a stranger, he told her that he had heard of her love and devotion to Naomi, and how she had come with her husband’s mother into this land of strangers. ‘And,’ he added, ‘may the Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.’

“Boaz was fine to speak so kindly to Ruth,” nodded Betty. “I thought that all the rich men and princes and persons were unkind in those days.”

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“Not quite all, as you see,” smiled Uncle Jim.

“Ruth was greatly comforted by these kind words. When they all sat down to eat, Boaz called to her, even more kindly, to come and join them. And he gave her parched corn — corn roasted on a sieve — which was a favorite food in Canaan, and she ate, and was grateful. After dinner, Boaz told the reapers to let her glean quite close to them, among the very sheaves themselves, and to drop handfuls of good ears as if by accident, that she might pick them up.

“The reapers did so, and, when night fell, Ruth found that she had quite a lot of grain for Naomi and herself. Naomi, when she heard Ruth’s story, and saw her gleanings, said: ‘Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead.’

“Now Naomi knew, by all the things Ruth told her, that the sweet young woman of the Moabites had, all at once, gained the love of Boaz, the kinsman of her dead husband. Naomi wanted Boaz to take Ruth to his heart, and to make her his wife. But Boaz, who had indeed fallen deeply in love with Ruth, knew that Naomi had a nearer kinsman than himself who had the first right to take the daughter-in-law of Elimelech as his wife; and he said that this kins-

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man's consent must be obtained before he, Boaz, could prove to Ruth the love he felt for her.

"So in the full sunshine of the morning Boaz sat in an open place by the gate of the city. When the near kinsman of whom he had spoken passed, he called to him, and bade him sit down also. Then he summoned ten elders — wise old men who were to be witnesses of what was to follow.

"Boaz spoke to Naomi's kinsman and said, 'Naomi, who was the wife of Elimelech, our brother, has come back to Bethlehem from Moab, and wishes to sell a piece of land that belonged to her husband in Bethlehem. It is for you to say, before anyone else, if you will buy it.'

"Naomi's kinsman answered, 'I will buy it.'

"But then Boaz went on:

"'The same day that you buy the field of Elimelech you must also marry Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, that her children may inherit the land that belonged to her husband, Elimelech's son.'

"Naomi's kinsman shook his head: 'That I cannot do!' he said. 'I have little ones of my own to inherit all that belongs to me. I cannot share their inheritance with the children of a Moabitess. Therefore buy the field yourself.'

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“So Boaz said to the elders and all the people who were listening: ‘Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s and all that was his son’s! And ye are witnesses, too, that I take Ruth, Elimelech’s son’s wife, to be my wife. And her children and my children shall inherit all that was his.’

“So Boaz married sweet Ruth, and they had a little son. On the day that Naomi took the tiny baby into her arms, all the women who were her neighbors rejoiced with her. They said: ‘Blessed be the Lord that hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, whose name may be famous in Israel. And he — this baby — shall be to thee a restorer of thy life, to give sweetness to thine old age! For thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him!’

“The baby’s name was called Obed. And his son, when he grew up, was Jesse, the father of David, the shepherd, who, as we shall see, became King over all Israel.”

“Ruth was indeed a wonderful woman,” declared Betty as the story ended. “I always did love her. I don’t believe many girls to-day would work in the fields to support a mother-in-law. Do you think so, Uncle Jim?”

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“Frankly, I do not think they would,” he replied thoughtfully, stroking his chin. “Like yourself, Betty, I have always loved Ruth.”

“So did Boaz,” ventured Dick. “Wasn’t the kinsman sorry he didn’t take Ruth?”

Uncle Jim said that, though the Bible does not say so, the kinsman had a right to regret his decision.

“Now, let us speak of the next story,” he resumed briskly. “It is to be about another baby who grew to be a wonderful man. You shall hear about this little one to-morrow, and the title of the story will be, ‘The Child of the Holy Tent, the Story of Samuel.’”

THE CHILD OF THE HOLY TENT

THE STORY OF SAMUEL

THE next morning when Betty and Dick reached the breakfast room, Uncle Jim was not there.

"He may not be back until late this afternoon," volunteered Mrs. Burroughs, observing the disappointment in their faces. "You two children must eat your breakfast. Then go out and play in the orchard," was her suggestion.

"Where has Father gone?" demanded Dick.

"He took an early train to a nearby place to see an old friend who is ill," replied Betty's mother.

"Mother!" cried Betty, her face reflecting real concern. "You don't think Uncle Jim will tell his sick friend *our* stories, do you? If he does — if he tells them before he tells them to us, I'll never, *never* forgive him! Will you, Dick?"

"Were Father to hear you talk that way I know he wouldn't be pleased at all," rebuked Dick.

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"You are right, Dick, my lad," said Mrs. Burroughs, nodding her approval. "Betty, that is not the beautiful spirit of Ruth," she added, turning to her little daughter.

Betty's eyes filled with tears. Tears came easily to Betty Burroughs' eyes. But no one laughed at her this time. Dick regarded her soberly, almost sorrowfully, then Mrs. Burroughs drew Betty to her and spoke in her gentle way, pointing out that what she called "petty jealousy" was a many-headed monster that, one day, would turn Betty's sweet face, as well as her sunny disposition, into sourness.

"Then your temper and your good looks will be spoiled for life, Betty dear," she added.

Betty instantly brushed the tears from her eyes, for she was just a wee bit vain, and was very proud of her beautiful face, her blue eyes and yellow curls.

"I'll be good, Mother," she promised. "After breakfast Dick and I will go out and see if we can't bring back the story of some more miracles that we can tell to Uncle Jim."

Soon after breakfast the two children started out, and when they returned, just a little late for dinner, they were delighted to find Uncle Jim waiting for them on the front porch.

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“Oh, Uncle Jim!” cried Betty, throwing herself into his arms. “We’ve seen the most wonderful things this morning. Let me tell you about them.”

“After dinner, Blue Eyes,” smiled Uncle Jim.

But Betty could not wait. She was a very impatient little girl, and she not only chattered all the way to the table, but talked most of the time during the dinner. It was not until some time after dinner that she remembered that they were to have a story, and then Uncle Jim was besieged to tell it.

“Very well,” he promised. “Perhaps you two children will be glad to know that I did *not* tell this story to my friend who is sick,” added Uncle Jim, directing a quick glance at Betty, whose face flushed hotly. “You will recall the story that I told you some few days ago about The Tent of God,” he began:

“The Holy Tent that Moses had made in the wilderness was, you remember, set up in a place called Shiloh. From the door of the Tent Joshua had taught and guided the people, just as Moses had done.

“Then Joshua died, too. In those days there was no king in Israel; but everybody did what seemed right to himself, without thinking of

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other people. So there was a great deal of fighting and quarreling and trouble among the tribes.

“All the time the House of God stood on the little hill of Shiloh, where great oaks grew wide and free, dropping their acorns upon the grass. In the oaks the turtle-doves built their nests, and cooed softly over the pure white eggs. Big jays made harsh noises, and black and white magpies chattered back to the jays. There were black storks with homes in the firs, and common storks on the house-roofs; and fields of flax, where the flowers were as blue as the cloudless sky. Here was the very well where Jacob's sons had once fed and watered their flocks; and you might still see shepherd-boys taking care of the sheep and lambs. But there were vineyards now, also, where the big leaves grew green, and the grapes hung in purple bunches. Little towers were set in the middle of these vineyards; and watchmen, in warm sheepskin coats, kept guard over the fruit all night. Great gnarled fig-trees yielded green and purple figs; and the silver-gray olive-branches trembled and shimmered in the sun. The houses of the villages were built, very often, of bricks, and had wide, flat roofs, where the women spread out the soaked stalks of flax to dry into thread for linen. Altogether life was

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different now from what it had been among the tents of the shepherd-princes, long ago.

"The Holy Tent on the little hill was built about with priests' houses, but the shining cloud never came to hang over it now, for many of the people had quite forgotten God, and worshiped the idols of the foreign kings. The curtains of blue and crimson and purple were faded and worn; for, since the wise-hearted women had spun and woven them in the desert, several hundred years had passed. The lights of the golden candlesticks, made like almond-branches, were often allowed to go out. And where the people had once sung praises there was now only the music of the birds."

"Did that Tent stand there all those years?" asked Dick.

"Yes, son. I believe it did."

"Most tents would have crumbled to dust in that time," suggested Dick.

"My son, this Tent was different. It was God's Tent," reminded Uncle Jim, and then resumed his story.

"An old man called Eli acted as High-Priest; but he was tired and sad, and unable to stop the wickedness of the people. And Eli's sons were the most wicked of all. So it seemed as if Israel

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were lost to goodness forever. And then, one day, the presence of the Lord returned to the forsaken Tent at Shiloh. And it came back in answer to the loving worship of a little child.

“Some of the people of Israel, you see, still remembered the God who had brought them out of Egypt; and they came up once in every year to Shiloh, to offer gifts to Jehovah, as Moses had taught them — barley and figs and olives, and sometimes goats or lambs. Among these yearly pilgrims were a man and his wife from Mount Ephraim, on the other side of the valley. One day, as Eli, the old High-Priest, sat in a seat by the post of the Tent, he saw this woman, who was kneeling at the door of the House of God, weeping bitterly. Her lips were moving all the time, as if she talked to herself; and after watching her for a little, Eli asked what she was doing.

“Then the woman poured out her trouble to the old Priest. She had been praying for a child, because she had no little ones to make her happy. And she told Eli that, if God would only grant her a son, she would give the child to the Lord, to serve in the Holy Tabernacle all his life.

“Something of the old spirit of power and grace filled Eli’s heart. And he said:

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“‘Go in peace! And may the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of Him!’

“So the woman, who was called Hannah, went away, hopeful and rejoicing.

“Well, after some time her prayer was answered, and Eli’s blessing was fulfilled. A dear little boy was born to Hannah and her husband, in their home on Mount Ephraim. The mother, in her joy, called the baby ‘Samuel’ ‘because,’ she said, ‘that means “Asked of God.”’”

“What a beautiful name,” murmured Betty. “Why don’t we give such beautiful names now?”

“We do,” replied Uncle Jim. “But we forget the great meaning of the names. Most of the old Bible names are borne by men and women to-day, but few of them really know what their names mean.

“The next year Hannah’s husband went to Shiloh, as usual, to worship, and to carry his offerings to the Lord. But Hannah would not go with him.

“‘No!’ she said. ‘The next time I go I will take my dear little son Samuel with me! I will show him to the Lord in the Tabernacle! And then I will leave him, that he may stay there and serve God forever!’

“Samuel’s father, who loved Hannah better

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than anybody in the world, told her to do as seemed good to her, and to keep her promise to the Lord.

“Then, when Samuel was a little older and able to run about and play with the other children, Hannah took gifts of cattle from her husband’s herds, and flour from the store, and a bottle of wine made from the sweet vineyard grapes, and went up to Shiloh. And she took little Samuel with her.

“So Eli, one day, saw again the woman who had prayed at the door of the Holy Tent. This time she was bringing many gifts for the Lord Jehovah. And the greatest gift of all was her tiny son.

“In rapt and earnest words she told Eli who she was. ‘Oh, my lord!’ said she, ‘I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord! For this child I prayed! And the Lord has answered my prayer! Therefore, as long as he lives shall he be lent to the Lord!’

“Eli looked down at the little innocent child, And Samuel gazed up into the old Priest’s face with earnest, surprised eyes. Then Hannah told her little son always to be good and to worship God, and she left him in the Holy Tent, with the old Priest, forever.

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“But I do not think little Samuel was lonely. He lived among such interesting things, and he must have liked to look at the beautiful angels so cleverly embroidered upon the fine old colored curtains, and at the golden almond-boughs of the great candlestick. He learned to mix the spices for the incense — the holy perfume that was burnt on certain days — and you can imagine how he would enjoy beating the fragrant stuff ‘very small’ as Moses had commanded, and putting it to burn in the censer, which was a beautiful vase of gold. Then he would pour the glistening yellow oil into the lamps, set a light to the floating wicks, and watch the flame shine out among the shadows till all was bright and clear. And he worshiped the Lord Jehovah, innocently and wonderingly, all the time.

“He wore a small linen ephod, which hung from his shoulders as if it were a tiny gown. And his mother, every year, when she came to Shiloh to worship, brought him a little coat that she had made for him.

“What a great day that must have been for Hannah and Samuel! How they would fit the coat on together, and see, by its size, how much Samuel had grown. And he would, I am sure, tell his mother of the beauties of the inner parts

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of the Holy Tent, where she herself had never been; and describe to her the angels, and the lamps, and the golden bells on the hem of the High-Priest's robe. Perhaps he would tell her the story of Aaron's rod that blossomed in a single night, and of the little hidden vase of manna. Then he would kiss her good-bye, and wave his hand to her as he stood under the oak-trees in the dying sunlight; and watch her going away down the mountain path into the dusk of the valley on her way home.

“So Samuel lived — a little, sweet, pure-hearted child — among the fair, worn embroideries and old mysterious treasures of the Holy Tent, passing busily through them in the daytime, and sleeping in their very midst at night. He must have been like a spring flower in a grand, old, forsaken autumn wood! And the Lord saw him there and loved him, and chose him for His own.

“One night, then, Samuel lay down to sleep in the quiet shadows of the curtains, where the lamps of God were burning with a soft light before dying away into darkness. Eli, the old High-Priest, kept watch near at hand. But Eli's eyes grew heavy and dim with drowsiness, and presently his tired lids closed. And then Samuel, lying quiet on his bed, heard a voice in the Tent of God.

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“ ‘Samuel!’ called the voice, ‘Samuel!’ ”

“ ‘Here am I!’ answered little Samuel quickly, starting up. And he pattered across on his bare feet to Eli, for he thought that the Priest had called.

“ But Eli said, ‘I called not! Lie down again!’ So little Samuel went back to his bed and lay down again.

“ Then, a second time, came the voice: ‘Samuel!’ ”

“ Again Samuel jumped up and ran to Eli. ‘Here am I!’ said the child earnestly. ‘For thou *didst* call me.’ ”

“ But still Eli said that the little boy was mistaken. ‘I called not, my son! Lie down again!’ ”

“ So, once more, Samuel went back and lay down. And the Tent was very still, with only the sound of the night-breeze rustling in the oaks outside.

“ Then, a third time, the silence was broken. The urgent voice rang out again: ‘Samuel!’ ”

“ Then at last Eli, when Samuel came once more to him, knew that the Lord had called the child. And he said, ‘Go; lie down! And if the voice comes again, say, “Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth!” ’ ”

“ So Samuel lay down for the third time, and

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listened breathlessly. And the voice came to him once more, straight out of the Holy Place where the Ark stood behind the curtains.

“ ‘Samuel!’

“Then Samuel, trembling, yet full of joy, whispered:

“ ‘Speak, for Thy servant heareth!’

“And, in the quietness of the night, the Lord Jehovah told the child that great changes were to take place in Israel, and that those who did wrong were to make way for those who did right. Samuel listened earnestly to all that the Lord said to him. Then the voice died away, and, until the dawn came, all was quiet in the House of God.

“In the morning, the child got up and set wide the doors, as usual, and breathed the fresh sweet air. But the voice was clear in his memory. Only, as Eli’s sons were those who did the worst wrong, he was afraid at first to answer the old Priest’s questions. But when, at last, he did so, Eli said with earnest faith:

“ ‘It is the Lord! Let Him do what seemeth Him good!’

“And, after that night, the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, so perhaps the people in the valley would sometimes see the beautiful cloud shining again over the Holy Tent, and would know that

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the Lord Jehovah was teaching Samuel, just as He had taught Moses in the Wilderness, long ago."

"Uncle Jim, what is an ephod — the garment that Samuel wore?" asked Betty at the end of the story.

"An ephod is a priestly vestment of linen worn by the Jewish high-priests," replied Uncle Jim.

"Wasn't Samuel scared when God spoke to him that night?" wondered Betty.

"Would you have been?" returned Uncle Jim.

"I should say I would have," declared Betty.

"Perhaps Samuel had no reason to be afraid. He was not vain as some beautiful children are, nor was he jealous. As Samuel was a good boy, he knew not fear of God," answered Uncle Jim, giving her a keen glance.

Betty flushed more hotly than before.

"Think it over, Betty dear," he urged, patting her yellow curls. "Now both of you run along and next time I will tell you about 'The Sea-Robbers, the Story of the Fish-God,' concluded Uncle Jim.

"Oh, that does sound good, Father," cried Dick. "Come along, Betty. We'll make him tell that story this very day," promised Dick as he and Betty ran laughing from the house.

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THE STORY OF THE FISH-GOD

“**I**S this a pirate story?” questioned Dick when they had met for another of Uncle Jim’s delightful stories.

“Not exactly, Son,” replied Dick’s father. “It is a story of battle and mysterious happenings.”

“What was the Fish-God?” asked Betty.

“An idol which I shall tell you about in a moment. Some time ago you said that you wished to know more about the beautiful golden Ark of the Covenant, and to-day you will learn of some of the things that happened to it. I am certain that they will deeply interest both of you children.”

“Who were the Sea-Robbers?” begged Dick, who already was interested in the story, and impatient to know what it really was about. Betty was little less curious.

“I’ll not tell you another word in advance of the story itself, and if you interrupt again maybe I won’t tell it at all,” threatened Uncle Jim, but

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the smile that accompanied the threat told Betty and Dick that they need have no fears of such a tragedy. "Margaret, what am I going to do with these children?" demanded Uncle Jim, turning laughingly to Mrs. Burroughs.

"If you wish to have any peace at all, James, I would suggest that you begin your story as speedily as possible," replied Betty's mother.

"The advice is good. I'll follow it," agreed Uncle Jim. "Children, listen to the story of great deeds, both bad and good," added Uncle Jim, who then began relating one of the most fascinating stories that the children had ever listened to.

"One morning in Canaan the sun rose upon a terrible sight," he said. "Two long wide camps of war-tents were spread over the grassy plains where usually the sheep and goats grazed so peacefully; and from the tents came the clash of armor, and the hum of great crowds of soldiers. The Israelites and the Philistines were about to fight a big battle.

"The Philistines were a nation of sea-robbers who lived on the coast of Canaan. Their palaces and temples overlooked the golden shores and violet-blue waters of the Great Sea — the sea we now call the Mediterranean. And the chief god that they worshiped was a Fish-God.

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“ They had five Kings who went about in iron chariots; and it was always a time of awe for the Israelites when they heard the rolling wheels of the Sea-Robbers’ chariots, and the thudding gallop of their war-horses.

“ But this time the children of Israel were ready for battle; because Samuel, now a grave and beautiful youth about twenty years old, had told them that they would have to fight with the Philistines very soon. And Samuel was taught, as all the people knew, by God Himself.

“ So, when the sun was fully risen, and the world was flooded with a light too lovely for a scene so terrible, the armies met each other with the deep-toned chantings and sullen clang of a mighty old-world battle. And the Philistines won the day. When night fell on the exhausted and heart-broken Israelites they met together in their camp, and wept over their dead. And then the old men among them said:

“ ‘ Let us send to Shiloh for the Ark of Jehovah! Surely that will save us, as it used to do! ’ ”

“ Do you mean that the beautiful Samuel’s people were defeated by the Sea-Robbers? ” interrupted Betty.

“ Yes. The Israelites were not only badly beaten, but their dead were many.”

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“Where was Samuel all this time, Father?” demanded Dick.

“He was there, probably comforting the unhappy Israelites, and trying to advise them what ought to be done. Samuel, probably, having been taught by God, knew many things that his people did not. As I have already told you, too, it was the old men that advised sending for the Ark of Jehovah, for, in the old days, Joshua, when he fought the foreign armies, had always made the priests carry the Ark in front of the Israelites; just as, in later wars, the soldiers would carry the banner of the King.

“So messengers went through the dark starry night to Shiloh, and brought the Ark of God secretly to the field of battle. And, when the Children of Israel saw the Ark carried into the midst of their tents, they gave the old ringing, well-known battle-cry — the battle-cry that used always to burst out so triumphantly when they knew that Jehovah was in their midst.

“The Philistines heard the mighty shout and asked what it meant. And then the word ran through their ranks that the Ark of the Israelites’ God had been brought into the enemy’s camp. They were frightened, and said to each other:

“‘The shepherd-people have brought out the

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Ark of their wonderful God, who did such terrible things to the Egyptians! Let us escape!'

"Then their captains turned on them angrily and bade them be men — not frightened servants of the Hebrews. So they took courage again, and lined up in front of their tents, ready, once more, for battle.

"There, in the morning light, stood the shining golden casket, with the beautiful carved angels that Bezaleel had made. And behind it waited the rows of Israelite soldiers — breathless, silent, watching for the Sea-Robbers to take to instant flight. But the Israelites had neglected too long the great Jehovah of Battles. After the first moment of awed hesitation, the worshipers of the Fish-God rushed forward upon their enemies, killing them in hundreds, and driving them in full flight over the plain to take refuge in their tents. And then the Philistines took the holy Ark of the Covenant, and carried it away to their own country on the shores of the Great Sea."

"Oh, Uncle!" cried Betty. "Did they take the Ark?"

"Yes," nodded Uncle Jim.

"What I do not understand," spoke up Dick, "is why this wonderful Ark did not help the Israelites."

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“Son, the Israelites had not been very good, They had neglected the Ark and God until they were in trouble; then they cried for help. It was then that they bethought themselves of the holy object and brought it to the front. As their punishment, God permitted them to be defeated.

“When they reached the coast, the five Kings had the Ark taken into the temple of the Fish-God, and set it up by the side of their own big silver and wooden image, that had the head and hands of a man, and the scaly tail of a fish.

“What a strange sight it must have been in that dim temple! On stormy nights, the winds of the Great Sea howled across the few miles of low shore right up to the gates of the city of Ashdod, where the Fish-God’s temple stood. And these winds from the west would bring the smell of the salt weeds into the temple; so that the Fish-God must have seemed like a monster merman in a cave, when the five Kings, and the priests, and the magicians, after offering up incense to their idol, went away into the twilight and left the Ark of Jehovah behind.

“Did they wonder what would happen? Did they think that perhaps, in the morning, the image of the Fish-God would glow with some new mysterious life and strength and power? The

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Bible does not tell. But what it does tell is that, when they returned in the early dawn, they found Dagon, the Fish-God, struck down to the very earth, and lying stretched out on the ground in the temple, in front of the Ark."

"Good, good!" cried Betty, clapping her hands. "It served Dagon just right. Did God do that?"

"Yes, of course he did," said Dick, answering for his father.

"God felled the false god right in front of the sacred Ark," added Uncle Jim.

"The priests set the idol up again, awed and wondering. But, the next night, the Fish-God had fallen a second time. And, this second time, its head and its hands were cut away from it, and only its fishy stump remained.

"After that the people of Ashdod were all seized with sickness; and so they sent the Ark of God away to Gath, another city of the five Sea-Robber Kings. Then illness fell, too, upon the people of Gath. So the Kings sent the Ark to Ekron, yet a third city that belonged to them. But the people of Ekron would not have it. And, at last, after seven months, the Kings called together all the priests of the Fish-God, and begged to know what was the best thing to do with the Ark of the God of Israel.

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“The priests of the Fish-God told the five Kings to have a new cart made, and to take two milking-cows, that had never yet been yoked, and to harness them to the cart. Then, said the priests, the two little calves, that always ran by the side of their mothers, must be taken to their home-meadows; and the Ark of God must be laid upon the cart, with jewels of gold in a coffer, or box, by the side. The cows must be set free to take whatever path they chose. If they drew the Ark to Bethshemesh, which lay at the foot of the hills that divided the land of the shepherd-people from the land of the Sea-Robbers, then the Kings would understand that it was the Israelites’ God who had smitten the people of Ashdod, of Gath, and of Ekron. But if the mother-cows went back to their baby-calves, it would be a sign that the sickness and the trouble had only come by chance.

“The Kings did as the priests commanded. In their iron chariots they sat about, as their servants, under the orders of the priests, harnessed the cows to the new wooden cart, set the Ark of God upon it, and laid the jewels of gold by the side. And then the cows were set free. Instead of turning homewards to the meadows where their little calves nibbled at the grass, they hastened right away towards the hills of Bethshemesh,

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lowing as they went, and drawing the cart behind them.

“Then the five Kings of the Sea-Robbers gave rein to their horses, and followed after. Can you picture that strange and beautiful procession across the green pastures to the distant, hazy hills? How the sun would shine on the golden Ark, and the bright jewels, and the sleek, smooth coats of the cows! And how the five Kings, wondering, awed, expectant, would hold in their big, high-stepping horses, and follow in the track of the kine!

“On and on they went, until Bethshemesh was in sight. The Israelites, reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley, heard the lowing of the cows, and the rolling of the wheels, and the sound of the horses’ hoofs. And, looking up, they saw that, in this marvelous fashion, the Ark of God was being returned to them.

“Straight to a tall pillar that stood in a field went the two cows. And there they paused. Then the priests came and took the Ark of Jehovah from the cart. And the five Kings, marveling deeply, turned round and drove back again to Ekron.

“But the men of Bethshemesh were curious, and looked into the Ark, and the Lord slew many

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of them. So then they begged the men of Kirjathjearim to take it away. And the men of Kirjathjearim carried it to the house of a good man who lived on the quiet slopes of the hills. And in this house, among the mountain-trees, the beautiful casket of gold stayed for twenty years."

"That's the best story you ever told us," declared Dick as his father finished.

"It is beautiful and terrible," murmured Betty. "What made the cows go to Bethshemesh instead of hurrying back to their dear little calves?" she questioned.

"God led them," was Uncle Jim's brief reply.

"And He really slew the men of Bethshemesh because they peeped into the Ark?" wondered Betty.

"Yes. To show lack of respect for this beautiful and sacred relic would naturally arouse the anger of the Lord, and, as you have seen, those who did not treat it with proper respect were severely punished. The Ark, as you now know, finally found a resting place among the quiet hills where God's stars kept nightly vigil over it for twenty long years.

"That will be all for this time, children."

"What happened to the Fish-God?" Dick wanted to know.

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“Son, there was not enough of it left to be worth while fixing. However, I presume it was made over again, but I must confess that I do not know as to this.”

“What a wonderful thing it would be were the Ark of the Covenant some day to be dug up from one of the buried cities,” reflected Dick. “Would it not, Father?”

“Too wonderful to contemplate,” answered Dick’s father. “One can imagine, though, the wave of excitement that would sweep over the world. But, it isn’t possible. Our next story will be entitled, ‘The Little Harpist of the Hills, the Story of David.’ I think I told you something about David last summer, but this time I shall tell you more of him. I know you will agree with me that it is a wonderful story, my dears,” finished Uncle Jim.

THE LITTLE HARPIST OF THE HILLS

THE STORY OF DAVID

“**D**O you children know who it is that I am going to speak of to-day?” asked Uncle Jim when the children met him in the parlor next morning.

Neither one thought that perhaps the title held the answer to the question, but Betty suggested that it might be one of Father Abraham’s sons. Dick thought it might be Moses, all of which made Uncle Jim smile.

“I fear you two children do not think,” he rebuked.

“Is it about Samuel?” wondered Betty.

“Daughter, don’t guess,” said Mrs. Burroughs.

“I have to, Mother. Uncle Jim asks such unusual questions that, if I answer at all, I have to guess, and —”

“Do you give it up, Dick?” There was a twinkle in Uncle Jim’s eyes.

THE HARPIST OF THE HILLS

“Yes, I do,” admitted Dick. “Who was it, Father?”

“That is the story,” answered Uncle Jim teasingly. “Listen closely, and before I have gone far I think you may discover who the Little Harpist of the Hills is. To begin with I will say that quite a few years had passed since the events related in my previous story, and here the story really begins.

“One day an old man with gray hair, bowed shoulders, and tired, sad eyes, stood on the hillside above Bethlehem, looking down on the valley below. In his withered hands he held a horn, like the drinking-vessels that were used in the olden days; and a mantle lay upon his stooping shoulders. The horn was filled with oil, which smelled wonderfully sweet, and he was carrying it very carefully. Bees were humming in the sweet-flowering myrtles that grew near; far behind, in the distance, rose the purple heights of Mount Moriah. Sheep browsed among the flowers below; and the green barley was sprouting on the fields of Boaz and Ruth. Above all the other sounds of the valley — the calls of the little lambs and the voices of young children — came the rippling sweetness of a shepherd-boy’s harp.

“The old man was Samuel, now a great prophet

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in Israel, who had chosen a King for the people — a fine, strong youth called Saul. For some years Saul's rule had been good, but now he was doing many wrong things; so God had told Samuel that He had chosen another King, whom Samuel was to anoint with the oil that he carried so carefully in the horn. And this new King was one of the sons of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, the grandson of Boaz and Ruth.

"I knew it!" cried Betty.

"Knew what?" demanded the story-teller.

"That the story was to be about Samuel."

"Partly so, Blue Eyes," admitted Uncle Jim.

"But the Little Harpist of the Hills is quite another person. To resume:

"So Samuel, sad at heart because of Saul's failure, went down to the village of Bethlehem, and called Jesse and his sons to come and sacrifice before God. They came, with all the elders and other people of the village; and Samuel stood by the place of sacrifice with the horn of oil in his hand.

"Then, in obedience to what Samuel told him, Jesse made his sons pass before the prophet one by one. Eliab, a tall handsome man, came first. And Samuel, remembering that Saul had been chosen for his strength and beauty, said to him-

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self, 'Surely this is the chosen King!' But he heard the voice of God whisper:

" 'Look not on his face, nor at his height and strength! He is not My chosen one! Man looketh upon the eyes, but the Lord looketh into the heart! ' "

" Then Jesse called his second son, who was also big and fine, and made him pass before Samuel. But Samuel shook his head, and said:

" 'Neither hath the Lord chosen this man! ' "

" So, one by one, the seven sons stood before Samuel, and then passed on. And Samuel said to Jesse:

" 'The Lord hath not chosen these! Are these *all* thy children? ' "

" Jesse answered in surprise: 'There is only the youngest left. And he is a mere shepherd-boy, out in the pastures with the sheep.'

" But Samuel commanded Jesse to send for the shepherd-boy, and told everybody to wait until he came.

" So messengers were sent for Jesse's youngest son, and, by and by, up to the quiet place of sacrifice, breaking the silence among the little group of waiting men, floated the trembling music of a harp. And then, playing his pretty tunes, and walking with a springing step along the hilly

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path that led from the pastures, came David, the shepherd-boy, into the midst of them.

“Such a fine, fair lad he was, with bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and slim, active limbs. His little sheepskin coat lay on his shoulders, and his harp was in his hands. All eager and curious he came; and Samuel, the moment he saw him, heard the whisper of God:

“‘Arise! Anoint him! For this is he!’”

“Oh, I know now!” cried Betty, her eyes suddenly lighting up.

“So do I,” added Dick. “It is David, the youngest son of Jesse. I remember now that you told us about David last year when you gave us ‘Uncle Jim’s Bible Stories.’ Didn’t you?”

“Discovered!” exclaimed Uncle Jim so dramatically that even Mrs. Burroughs laughed heartily in chorus with the children. “Yes, David is the beloved little hero of our story for this morning, and when Samuel heard the whisper of God, he knew who it was that he was to anoint — the lad who one day was to be a king. You see, children, God seeks his own from humble places.

“So, in the presence of the seven brothers, and of their father Jesse, the old priest went to meet the shepherd-lad. He raised the horn of oil, and anointed David. And the perfume of myrrh and

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aloes and cassia flowed over the boy's garments as David, wide-eyed and wondering, let Samuel touch his hair, and his lips, and his fingers with the fragrant golden liquid. And then the Spirit of God came upon David. Awed, yet happy, he went back again to his sheep.

"There he stayed in the pasture, day after day, watching the flocks, and keeping them in place by means of stones from his sling. If a sheep strayed too far from the others, David would fit a big round stone into the sling, and carefully fling the pebble right in front of the wandering ewe or lamb. And when the stone fell before it, knocking up little bits of grass and earth, the sheep, though quite unhurt, would be frightened, and turn to run back to the flock. In this way the shepherd-boy grew very skilful with his sling. And always, morning and evening, he led the sheep with the music of his harp.

"Most of the shepherd-boys in Canaan could play on little pipes; and the flocks knew the sound and would come to the music. But David, with his harp, made lovelier melodies than all the rest. So when he led his sheep either to the pastures or to the fold, the sweetest tunes would echo over the quiet valleys and the slopes of the hills. And the people who heard the music as they went home

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at night after cutting their corn, or winnowing their barley, would know that David passed among them in the twilight, playing his harp."

"It seems to me that David was altogether too sweet and gentle to be a king in those days," interrupted Dick. "I should say that the people needed a man who could lead them into battle — who could fight for them, and —"

"You will see, Son," answered Uncle Jim. "Don't you think God knew whom he was choosing and why?"

"Of course he did, Dick," spoke up Betty.

"I didn't think before I spoke," admitted Dick a little crestfallen. "Please go on, Father."

"Sometimes," resumed Uncle Jim, "he had to take his sheep and goats into lonely places where wild beasts lived in caves among the rocks. And, one night, a lion came out of one of these caves, with a bear close behind. The lion went stealthily into the middle of the flock, and snatched up a little kid in its cruel mouth. The bear would have done the same, but brave young David rushed up to the lion and seized the kid. Then he caught the great beast by its beard, struck it, and slew it as it struggled. He did the same to the bear; and so, through his skill and bravery, the sheep and kids and lambs were saved.

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“And all the time that David led his sheep among the green pastures and beside the still waters, where they could feed peacefully and drink at their ease, he was the anointed King of Israel, who was, one day, to reign over the whole land.

“So the weeks passed, and David’s mind was always quiet and happy and full of peace; because, as you know, the Spirit of God had come upon him. But every bit of Saul’s ease of heart was gone; for, from him, the Spirit of God had departed. Evil thoughts tormented him, and troubled fancies filled his brain. So that his servants said an evil demon had been sent into the King.

“Then they went to Saul and told him of their fears for him. ‘Behold, O lord the King!’ they said. ‘An evil spirit from God troubleth thee! So let us, thy servants, seek out somebody who is a sweet player upon the harp, that, by his music, thou mayest be made well.’

“When Saul consented, they told him that the young son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, was fair to look at, brave and strong. And, they added, he could play very beautifully upon the harp. For everybody in the neighborhood knew the sound of David’s music, and found something strangely beautiful in its notes.

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“So Saul sent messages to Jesse, saying: ‘Send thy son, David the shepherd-boy, to me!’

“You may imagine how surprised Jesse was to receive such a message, and how he wondered what it meant. He called David from the pastures and told him he was to go to the royal house, for Saul had sent for him. And he loaded an ass with presents for Saul — fine white bread and sweet red wine. He sent the King a little kid as well. And so, taking all these gifts, David set out to obey the summons of the King.

“When Saul saw David, with his bright eyes and rosy cheeks and quick springing footsteps, he felt a great love for the shepherd-boy spring up in his heart. And he took David into his service, and made him his armor-bearer.”

“Father, do you mean to say that David killed a lion and a bear with his hands?” questioned Dick, whose face was a picture of amazement.

“Yes, Son.”

“How wonderful,” breathed Betty. “And did David tend his flocks just the same after he had been anointed King?”

“Yes, and he was one day to reign over the land as King of Israel,” Uncle Jim informed them.

Somehow Betty could not reconcile the sweet harpist of the hills with the brave youth who slew

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two wild beasts, and the more she thought over the subject, the more marvelous did it seem.

“What happened to David after he became Saul’s armor-bearer?” asked Dick.

“That is still another story, Dick. I will tell it to you this afternoon. Just now I must stop and write some business letters. We will call the afternoon’s story, ‘Goliath, the Story of the Giant’s Last Battle,’ ” concluded Uncle Jim.

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THE STORY OF THE GIANT'S LAST BATTLE

THE afternoon was nearing a close when Uncle Jim called the children out to the porch.

"It is cooler now, so suppose we stroll about the orchard while I am telling you the story of David and the Giant," he suggested.

Betty and Dick thought that would be fine, and Betty was enthusiastic over the plan. So, with Dick on one side, Betty on the other, their arms linked in his, Uncle Jim strolled out into the cooling shade of the fragrant orchard and began his story.

"I told you this morning that David became Saul's armor-bearer, and that Saul loved him very much," began Uncle Jim in his soothing voice, as they walked slowly along.

"Then, when the evil spirit came to the King, and tormented him, so that he was worn out with sad and troubled thoughts, he would tell David to play on the harp. And all through the royal rooms the sweet music floated, just as it had

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traveled across the Bethlehem valleys and hills. Perhaps David sang sometimes as well — perhaps his lips formed the very psalms that he wrote when he was older. Who knows? He may have hushed Saul's sorrow with the words, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul!' For we know that the Spirit of God was in David, and when he played Saul was refreshed and made well and filled with all his old content.

"But how little the monarch, listening to David's tunes, guessed that the shepherd-boy had been anointed King of Israel in his own stead!

"Soon afterwards, when David had gone back to his sheep, the Sea-Robbers once again came across the border, bringing a great army to overthrow Saul's kingdom. Among them was a mighty champion, a giant called Goliath, who wore a curious brass helmet and an enormous coat of mail. He had brass from his knees to his feet, and a brass breast-plate, and he carried a huge spear and a sword, also. And his shield-bearer went before him.

"He stood out, morning and evening, for everybody to see, in front of the glittering ranks of



DAVID, THE SWEET SINGER OF ISRAEL.

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the Sea-Robbers, and he called to the armies of Israel, opposite, crying:

“ ‘ Choose a man of yourselves, O Israelites, who will come, single-handed, and fight with me! If he can kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I kill him, then you and your armies shall be subject to us for evermore! ’

“ And all the people of Israel looked at the great giant, in his strong glittering armor. But not one of them dared go out, single-handed, to give Goliath battle.

“ So morning and evening, for forty days, the Philistine giant sent his proud cry ringing across the space between the two armies. David’s three eldest brothers were among the Israelite soldiers; but, although they were tall and strong, each was afraid to go out alone and fight the giant.

“ Forty days! ” exclaimed Dick. “ I should think Goliath’s voice would have given out.”

“ Goliath was a bad man, and I know what happened to him, but I’m not going to tell,” chirped Betty.

“ Then one day,” continued Uncle Jim, not heeding the interruption, “ the shepherd-boy came to visit them from his father’s pastures, bringing them and their captain gifts of cheeses and barley-bread.

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“ As David stood talking to his brothers the proud cry came, as usual, ringing across from the Philistines’ camp:

“ ‘ Choose a man of yourselves, O Israelites, who will come single-handed and fight with me! ’

“ David, looking up, saw, standing out from among the ranks of the enemy, the great, haughty, armored giant!

“ The shepherd-boy gazed first at the giant and then at his brothers and their companions. He was amazed because nobody was brave enough to answer the proud and defiant call. But when he asked how it was, his brothers were angry with him, and said he had left home only that he might see a battle. So David inquired from everybody else the reason why no one went out and killed Goliath. At last Saul himself heard of the young shepherd-lad who was so surprised at his soldiers’ want of courage.

“ Saul sent for David; but he did not recognize his former harp-player at all. He asked many questions, and the shepherd youth said quite simply, in reply, that as nobody else would do so he was prepared to go out and fight Goliath himself.

“ Everybody, including Saul, shook their heads, and they half-smiled, and said: ‘ Goliath is a great

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giant, trained to be a soldier! You are only a stripling! He would kill you, instead of you killing him! ’

“ But brave young David persisted. And at last Saul, looking at him admiringly though anxiously, said :

“ ‘ Go, then! And the Lord be with you! ’

“ So the King told his armor-bearer to put his own royal coat of mail upon David and to give him his breast-plate, his helmet, and his spear. But when David tried them on they were too large and heavy for him. He put them off and said that he could not wear them.

“ Then the shepherd-boy, in his simple shepherd’s smock, went down to the brook in the valley, chose five big smooth stones, and put them into the bag in which he used to carry his food. With his sling in one hand and his shepherd’s staff in the other, he went out in front of both armies, and stood where the great giant could see him.”

“ Oh, what a wonderful boy! ” cried Betty. “ Wasn’t he afraid of that terrible giant, Uncle Jim? ”

“ No. David’s trust was in God, and in his own skill with the sling.

“ Then Goliath came marching across the open space, with his shield-bearer in front. He looked

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in angry scorn at the fair-headed, bright-cheeked lad with the sling and the staff.

“ ‘ You come out with a stick as if you meant to beat a dog! ’ cried the contemptuous giant. ‘ Come a little nearer, and I will give your dead body to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the field! ’

“ But David answered steadily: ‘ I come to you, not in my strength, but in the name of the Lord God of all armies! ’

“ Then all at once he darted forward, fitting a stone into his sling as he ran. Just before he came within reach of the giant’s spear, he slung the stone with his old, well-known, skilful movement, and the stone struck the great Philistine on the forehead, above his eyes.

“ Goliath fell forward, and lay unconscious upon the ground, his brass helmet pressing down and hiding the deep wound. Then David leaped upon the prostrate form, and, seizing the giant’s own sword, drew it from the sheath and cut off Goliath’s head. And the whole army of the Philistines, when they saw that their great champion was killed, turned and fled.

“ The Israelites, with great shouts, pursued them. But David was led before Saul, carrying Goliath’s head in his hand.

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“Then Saul, in a bewildered manner, gazed at the lad, and seemed to recall his face. Looking from David’s frank, brave countenance to the bleeding head of the terrible giant, he said confusedly: ‘Whose son art thou, young man?’

“And David, quite simply, answered, ‘I am the son of thy servant, Jesse the Bethlehemite.’

“In this way Saul knew that the lad who had slain the mighty Philistine giant was the youth who had once been his armor-bearer, and had driven the spirit of misery from him with the sweet music of his harp.

“David lived for a long time with Saul and his son Jonathan, and, in the end, he became King of Israel himself.

“When he was King, he took the Holy Tent of God to Jerusalem, and set it up there. And Solomon, his son, made a beautiful Temple for the Golden Ark, which you must read about in the Bible, for it would take too long for me to describe it. And, as well as the Temple, Solomon built a palace of cedar wood, and sat to give judgment on an ivory throne, with carved lions on each side of the steps that led to it. In the gardens were peacocks, and strange monkeys clambered among the trees; and his stables were full of

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horses, and his chariots were most magnificent, and kings and queens came to see his glory. Yet he never loved the Lord as faithfully as did his father, who had once been a shepherd-boy of Bethlehem, leading his sheep to pasture with the music of his harp."

"Who would think that the sweet David could be so ferocious," marveled Betty.

"No. Not that," objected Dick. "He was fighting God's battle. Isn't that right, Father?"

"It is, Son. He not only could drive the evil spirits from the King with the harp, but he could slay a giant with a stone from his sling. He was one of the most remarkable of the Bible characters," answered Dick's father.

"Uncle Jim, what is meant by 'being possessed of an evil spirit,' the kind that David chased out of the King with his harp?" asked Betty.

"Well — well, Blue Eyes, I don't know that any of us can answer that question correctly. I should imagine, though, that it meant a bad attack of temper — rage such as perhaps you fly into once in a while. Eh, Betty?" Uncle Jim's eyes twinkled.

"Yes, I do," was Betty's frank admission, the color rising to her forehead. "But I think that if I had a David to play soft music for me on the

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harp, the evil spirit would run away from me, too," she added, then pouted when the others smiled at her words.

Uncle Jim then announced that the story for the next day would be, "The Ivory Palace, the Story of Ahab's Punishment."

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THE STORY OF AHAB'S PUNISHMENT

“**H**ERE’S a surprise, Uncle Jim,” cried Betty, who for the first time since his arrival had gotten down to breakfast ahead of Uncle Jim and Dick.

“Indeed it is a surprise to find you up so early,” he admitted, giving the little girl a hearty good-morning kiss. “How did you ever manage it?”

“I didn’t. Mother did it,” confessed Betty.

“So that’s it, eh?” laughed Uncle Jim.

“Yes. But that isn’t the surprise I meant. The one I mean is a real one, and when you hear about it you will be just as surprised and happy as I am,” she promised.

“Don’t keep me in suspense. What is it?” begged Dick.

“A picnic! There now. I knew it would make you glad, Dick Burroughs. Yes, Uncle Jim, Mother has arranged for all of us to go to the Glen. We are to eat our luncheon there, then our Uncle Jim is going to entertain us with stories

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all the rest of the day. Won't that be perfectly adorable?" chattered Betty.

"Quite so," agreed Uncle Jim dryly.

As they entered the breakfast room, Betty announced that Mother had the luncheon prepared and packed in baskets, which Dick and his father were to carry. After they were seated at the breakfast table, Mrs. Burroughs confirmed what Betty had told them.

Immediately after breakfast they started out across the fields, Mrs. Burroughs leading the way to a wooded ravine that was cool and inviting with its restful greens and deep, silent shadows. They continued on until they reached a beautiful waterfall that cascaded down the rocky sides of the glen, finally breaking into a cloud of silver spray that caught the sun's rays and became a drifting rainbow of many colors.

Betty and Dick immediately took off their shoes and stockings and waded into the pool at the foot of the rainbow. They paddled about until their feet were numb with cold. They then raced up and down the steep banks, played "Hiding from the Sea-Robbers," as Betty called it, and made believe that the Philistines were chasing them. Mrs. Burroughs and Uncle Jim spent the time talking.

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It was queer, but noon came, or seemed to come, in just a few quick little minutes after the party arrived at the Glen. The luncheon was then laid on a flat rock, and Betty and Dick sat down without waiting to be asked. So hungry were they that they could hardly sit still while Uncle Jim was saying grace. My, what appetites they did have that noon, and Dick declared that never had there been anything made that was so delicious as Mrs. Burroughs' egg sandwiches. Betty said nothing. She was too busy to talk, and the dainty picnic luncheon disappeared with magical quickness.

"Now I am ready for a story," announced Dick as he finished and tossed his wadded-up paper napkin into the pool at the foot of the cascade. "How about you, Betty?"

"I am so contented that I could just die listening to a story," replied Betty.

"If you are thinking of doing anything like that, I don't believe I shall care to tell a story," objected Uncle Jim in mock-seriousness.

"Oh, please do, Uncle. We want to hear all about the Ivory Palace and things," urged Betty. "I promise to be very good and very quiet. Please, Uncle!"

"Very well. I know of no more beautiful set-

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ting for a Bible story than this, one of God's gardens," he replied, pausing and gazing thoughtfully about him. "It prepares your mind for what I am about to describe.

"Can you picture to yourselves, children, a beautiful palace of ivory? And can you imagine it set among pink almond-blossoms, and evergreen laurels, and old gnarled fig trees, while grassy slopes around it are filled with the music of nearly a hundred brooks? Can you picture that in your minds?" asked Uncle Jim.

"Yes," breathed Betty. "It is a beautiful picture, too; so beautiful that it almost makes one forget that wonderful rainbow yonder."

"Father, were the floors of the palace made of ivory also?" questioned Dick.

"Yes, Son."

"They must have been awful slippery," ventured Dick. "Please go on, Father."

Without rebuking the children for interrupting him, Uncle Jim resumed his story.

"Such was the house of Ahab, King of Samaria, which he had built in the royal city raised up by his father, King Omri, among the beautiful meadows of Shechem, where little Joseph had once wandered in search of his brothers and their flocks of sheep. Not very far away was Joseph's

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grave, for the Children of Israel had brought back all that was left of the body of their great forefather almost to the very spot where the Ishmaelites had bought and taken him away to Egypt. A wide-spreading oak hard by was Jacob's oak, and under its branches stood a tall pillar of stone. Every child who passed by the pillar knew that it had been set up there by Joshua, and that, before he had raised it, he had gathered the Israelites together to remind them of their old, old promise to worship Jehovah, and Jehovah alone. 'This stone has heard your words,' he had said. 'It shall always stand under the oak in witness.' So there it stood, with the Holy Tent not very far above it.

"Ahab, living in his ivory palace, ruled over ten tribes of Israel — ten tribes who had rebelled against the royal family of David at Jerusalem. But Ahab cared nothing for the grave, sweet memories of the shepherd-princes, of whom the people told so many stories in the valley below. The King of Samaria had married a wife from among the heathen rulers, a princess called Jezebel, who did not believe in the God of Isaac and Jacob, but only worshiped the sun and the moon.

"Persuaded by Jezebel, Ahab made a great temple on the hill, in honor of 'Baal.'"

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“Such funny things to worship. Who was Baal, Uncle?” again interrupted Betty.

“A false god,” spoke up Dick.

“Yes, and something more,” Uncle Jim informed them. “The word Baal means ‘master’ or ‘power’—and Jezebel believed that all the power of life fell to earth from the sky in the rays of the sun and the moon.

“So, within Baal’s temple were set up strange idols made of ebony. A great poet, Jeremiah, described these idols long afterwards and said that they were as upright as palm-trees, and robed in crimson and purple, and decked with silver and gold. Chains and nails held them in their places, and on men’s shoulders were they borne, because of themselves they could neither come nor go. Four hundred and fifty priests were put into the temple, to hold services in honor of these enormous statues, carved and decorated by the hands and tools of men. How different from the old pure worship of the true God, who had told the Israelites that they must never bow down to a ‘graven image.’”

“It is a wonder that God did not punish Ahab and his wife,” observed Dick.

“I think that Ahab was more to blame than Jezebel,” declared Betty.

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“As to that, I can’t say,” replied Uncle Jim.
“God, however, did punish both, as you will see.

“Every day, then, Ahab and Jezebel and their household went in procession to the big temple, and worshiped the image of the sun-god, or the statue of the goddess of the moon. Then Ahab was escorted by servants to his ivory porch, where he sat on a throne and settled matters that were brought before him by his people. One morning, as he was giving his judgments, a stranger, wrapped in a mantle, mounted the steps that led up to the entrance of the porch; Ahab, from his throne, watched the stranger come. He would wonder very much who it could be, for the people of the desert were not ruled by the Kings of Samaria. He waited, however, to hear his servants proclaim the stranger’s name.

“The servants spoke to the man in the mantle, and then they announced him:

“‘Elijah, the Tishbite, who has come here from Gilead, asks audience of the King!’

“Ahab looked inquiringly at the newcomer, and everybody else stood listening. Then Elijah raised his arm before the King and pointed to the temple where the people worshiped the sun and the moon.

“‘As the Lord God of Israel liveth,’ he cried in

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a loud voice, 'the God before whom I stand! There shall be neither dew nor rain in the land until the Lord sends it once more in answer to my prayer!'

"Then, before the King and the courtiers had recovered from their amazement, he turned away, and went down the hill again to the plains. And Ahab was left to his worship of the statues of the sun-god and the goddess of the moon.

"Did it turn out as Elijah said it would?" questioned Dick eagerly.

"Yes, Son.

"From that day all the moisture in the land began to dry up. No soft, warm rain fell from the sky in the day-time, and, worse still, no silvery dew spangled the grass at night. All the little bubbling streams that flowed by the ivory palace disappeared from their pebbly beds. Hot and cruel, like a great ball of brass, the sun stared down on the scorched meadows where Joseph's young feet had trodden among the flowers; cold and cruel, and without any softness, the moon glittered through the fading leaves of Jacob's oak.

"Ahab and Jezebel, who thought that Elijah had done all this, searched the whole land through to find him. Jezebel wanted to put him to death with the other prophets. Only Obadiah, the

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governor, hid a hundred of these prophets, for he knew that there was a God who was far above the sun and the moon."

"And where was Elijah all this time?" asked Dick.

"He was hidden in a cave by the rushing, leaping waters of the brook Cherith. Great rocks overhung the gorge through which the stream ran, and black ravens nested among the crags. And the ravens, commanded by God, every morning and evening brought bread and meat to Elijah, while, to quench his thirst, he drank the cold water from the stream.

"By and by, because there was still no rain in the land, even the deep churning brook of Cherith dried up, and Elijah was taken care of, for a time, by a widow. She had only a little food left in the house when he went to her. But, so long as he lived there, the food, by a miracle, never grew less.

"Then the time came when God told Elijah to go to Ahab again.

"Ahab, when he saw the prophet, was afraid, but he dared not do anything to him now. Everybody was dying of famine under the sun and moon; for, without rain and dew, nothing would grow. The King asked Elijah if it were he that

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was troubling Israel. But Elijah told Ahab that the trouble had come through himself.

“Then the four hundred and fifty priests of the sun-god went with Elijah and Ahab to Mount Carmel, a mountain with rugged slopes and deep gorges, from the top of which you could see the purple sea. And the priests of the sun and moon gods laid their sacrifice upon an altar.

“All day they cried to their idols to send down fire on to the altar; but no fire came. Then towards evening, Elijah built an altar of twelve stones, and had a great trench dug round it, and made the people fill the trench with water from a strange deep well on the top of Mount Carmel. And he put his sacrifice upon the altar, and cried out to the great God whom Ahab had forgotten.

“And the fire of the Lord fell upon Elijah’s altar; and it burnt up the sacrifice, and shone in triumphant glory on the awed face of Ahab, and the frightened countenances of the sun-god priests, and the grave glad eyes of Elijah. The brightness sent shadows flickering among the dying trees, so that to those who watched in the hot parched valley below it must have seemed a beacon-light of hope and joy.

“Then Elijah had the four hundred and fifty priests taken down into the valley and put to

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death. And Elijah told Ahab that the fire that had fallen from heaven was a promise from the Most High God that He would no longer leave the land to the mercy of the false idols, but would send His refreshing dew to it once more.

“ ‘ Arise, eat and drink ! ’ said Elijah to Ahab, ‘ for there is a sound of abundance of rain. ’

“ So Ahab was comforted, and Elijah went back to the top of Mount Carmel with his servant, and began to pray. He said to the servant, ‘ Go, and look towards the sea ! ’ The servant went, and came back, saying, ‘ There is nothing. ’ Seven times Elijah told him to go. And the seventh time the servant returned, and cried : ‘ Behold ! There ariseth out of the sea a little cloud, like a man’s hand ! ’

“ Then Elijah bade him hurry down to Ahab in the valley and say that the storm was coming. Almost immediately the clouds rushed up, black and strong, the winds blew, and the heavens seemed to open. Down upon the parched, weary, thirsty earth, left so long to the burning sun and the cold white moon alone, fell the silver torrents of merciful rain. And Ahab sprang into his chariot, and fled home before the valley was quite flooded ; while Elijah ran before him, fleeter and stronger than even the horses of the King.”

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“I guess Ahab and Jezebel got enough water to satisfy them,” declared Dick with emphasis. “And could Elijah run faster than Ahab’s swift chariot horses?”

“Yes, Son.”

Dick looked his amazement.

“Uncle Jim, I don’t understand about the fire that came down and burned up the sacrifice. What was it?” begged Betty.

“It was the fire from Heaven — God’s fire,” answered Uncle Jim. “Do you children wish to hear another story, or would you prefer to run away and play?”

“Another story,” cried Dick and Betty in chorus.

“Yes, James. Tell them another. We have the afternoon before us,” added Mrs. Burroughs.

“‘The Mantle of Elijah,’ then, will be the next story,” announced Uncle Jim. “It is ‘The Story of a Wonderful Miracle.’”

THE MANTLE OF ELIJAH

THE STORY OF A WONDERFUL MIRACLE

“**T**HIS story, children, is more about Elijah and his pupil. I believe I told you of Elijah when reading ‘Uncle Jim’s Bible Stories’ to you last summer. However, you won’t mind hearing about this great man again, especially so because I shall tell you many new and interesting things. It really will be a new story,” Uncle Jim informed Dick and Betty.

“Oh, goodie! I just love to hear about that wonderful man,” bubbled Betty Burroughs, bobbing her head up and down vigorously. Betty nodded for two reasons — to give emphasis to her words, and further because she was just a little bit sleepy. The exercise from running up and down the steep sides of the ravine, together with the hearty luncheon that she had eaten, made Betty very weary, but she was all eagerness to hear more.

“Why not tell us something of Ahab and Jezebel?” suggested Dick.

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“Perhaps later on, Son. Just now we are to hear about Elijah. I will now begin, so please give me your close attention, for I wish you both to remember all about this great and good man to whom God gave the power to bring the dead back to life.”

“We are listening, Uncle Jim,” murmured Betty, as a reminder that it was time for him to begin the story.

“The sun was beating down on the plains one day as a long train of oxen, yoked two and two, were drawing their ploughs over a wide-stretching field. Each plough was guided by a man in a loose blue cotton robe, with a white cloth wound about his head. Elijah stood on the edge of the field, and watched the oxen and their drivers pass,” said Uncle Jim.

“Slowly the long train moved on. As the last ploughman drew near to the prophet, Elijah took off his mantle and laid it upon the laborer’s shoulders.”

“Why did Elijah do that?” demanded Betty, sitting up with newly aroused interest.

“That was Elijah’s sign that the ploughman had been called to God’s service,” explained Uncle Jim.

“And didn’t the ploughman object to leaving

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his oxen and going away with Elijah?" wondered Betty.

"Yes. I was going to ask you what the man did," added Dick.

"The man left his oxen and his plough, went and said farewell to his people, and followed Elijah until the day that God took the great prophet to Himself," said Uncle Jim.

"The ploughman's name was Elisha, and week after week he went with Elijah, as the prophet traveled from place to place. Then one day, while they talked together, a chariot and horses of fire suddenly appeared between them and divided them. Then came the sound of a whirlwind, and, in the fire and the whirlwind, Elijah was carried up to heaven and was no longer seen by his disciple. Only his long mantle had fallen from him and lay upon the ground. Elisha lifted it wonderingly and reverently, as something left to him by his great teacher."

"Did a chariot with horses really come down to take Elijah to heaven?" wondered Betty.

"Yes, Blue Eyes. Chariot and horses of fire."

"How perfectly wonderful," marveled Betty. "I should think the fire would have burned Elijah to death."

"God's fire destroys only as he wills that it

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should," replied Uncle Jim. "You will recall how it consumed Elijah's sacrifice on the altar, which I told you about in the previous story."

"Yes," nodded Dick.

"And did Elijah really go to heaven without first dying?" persisted Betty.

"Yes. And, so far as we know, he is the only person in the history of the world who ever reached heaven that way," added Uncle Jim.

"Oh, how wonderful!" cried Betty.

"From that time the power of Elijah entered into Elisha, and he was able to work the same kind of miracles. There were other prophets in Israel, but none so powerful. All the good people who loved God looked to Elisha to help them. So he was not at all surprised when one day a poor woman, the widow of a dead prophet, came to him in very great distress to ask for aid.

"'Thy servant, my husband, is dead,' she said pitifully. 'Thou knowest that he was a good man. But he was poor, and he died owing money, and the man to whom he owed the money has come to take my two little sons, and he will sell them, my children whom I love, to be slaves!'

"Sell them? Sell the widow's children?" exclaimed Betty in amazement.

"Yes. For this was done, in those days, if any-

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one owed money when he died, and if his sons were too young to work and pay off the debt. So the poor widow was in the deepest distress. Elisha looked at her compassionately, and answered:

“ ‘ Let me think what I can do for you. What have you in your house? ’

“ The woman shook her head sadly. ‘ I have nothing! ’ she said. ‘ Just one little pot of oil! ’

“ Then Elisha gave her a very strange command.

“ ‘ Go and borrow all the pots, and the jugs, and the basins, and the drinking-cups that you can,’ said he. ‘ Visit all your neighbors, and ask them to lend you every empty dish they have. Then go back into your house and shut the door, with no one but yourself and your sons inside. Set to work to fill the things you have borrowed by pouring out from your little pot of oil! And put them aside, as you fill them, one by one.’ ”

“ That was a strange thing to tell her to do,” spoke up Dick.

“ Yes. Why did Elisha tell her to do that? ” wondered Betty.

“ You will see in a moment. Do be patient,” was Uncle Jim’s smiling reply.

“ So the poor widow did as Elisha told her. She nearly filled the one room of her little house with

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all the jugs and vases and big bowls that she borrowed from her neighbors. Then she and her sons shut the door, and shaded the window, and the little boys brought the rest of the borrowed dishes to their mother to be filled.

“The widow lifted the small pot and began to pour the oil into the big bowl that the children held. She poured and poured until it was full! Then the little boys put it carefully on one side and brought another. She filled that also, and so it went on, as her sons, wide-eyed with astonishment, brought basin after basin to her side, and she said, ‘Bring me yet more!’ Then one of the children answered:

“‘There is not a basin more!’

“Then she looked into the little pot and saw that, at last, it was empty!

“So the poor widow opened the door of the house, and went out and told the man of God. He said: ‘Go, sell the oil, pay the debt, and with the rest of the money live thou and thy children in peace!’”

“Where did all the oil come from?” asked Betty.

“From the little pot of oil, of course. Don’t you understand?” chided Dick.

“No, I don’t.”

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“It was a miracle, Blue Eyes,” Uncle Jim informed her. “Elisha, as you now know, wore the mantle of Elijah, his great teacher, which means that he possessed all the powers of Elijah to work miracles.

“A little time afterwards Elisha came to a place called Shunem, where a rich woman lived. Whenever he passed her house she would call him in to eat and drink, and at last she had a little chamber built for the prophet against the wall of the house, and a bed put in it, with a chair and a table and a candlestick, so that at any time he might turn in there to rest and sleep. For she knew that he was a man of God, and that he traveled about working miracles in one place or another, and she wished to do him honor in every way she could.

“In return for her kindness, Elisha promised that she should have a little son — the child for whom she had longed for many, many years. How glad and happy she was, and how she loved and cherished her little boy when he was born! And all the time the small room was kept furnished and cared for, against the wall of the house, so that Elisha could go to it whenever he liked.

“One day, when the son of the sweet Shunamite lady had grown into a fine little lad, his father took him down into one of his fields to

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watch the reapers. It was terribly hot, and all at once he fell down, crying out:

“ ‘ My head! oh, my head! ’

“ The father, in deep distress, had the little boy carried home to his mother. She took him into her arms and sat there, silently nursing him, until noon; and at noon he died.

“ Then without a word or a tear, but with her face full of calm trust, she herself carried him to Elisha's little room against the wall. She laid him down on the prophet's narrow bed and went out, shutting the door behind her.

“ Calling to her husband, she said: ‘ Tell one of the servants to saddle an ass, and to accompany me. I am going to the man of God! ’

“ When her husband asked why, she only answered: ‘ It shall be well. ’

“ So, followed by the servant, she rode away twenty miles across the hot plain to Mount Carmel, where she knew Elisha was to be found.

“ Elisha saw her coming, and sent his servant, Gehazi, to meet her, and to ask if all was well with her husband and child. But she only answered, hurriedly, ‘ It is well, ’ and rode on.

“ Then, when she came up to Elisha, she dismounted, and fell at his feet, and told him what had happened.

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“Elisha gave Gehazi his staff, and sent him on to the house of the Shunammite lady, and told him to lay the staff on the face of the child. So Gehazi went. But the child’s mother would not go with him.

“‘As the Lord liveth, I will not leave thee!’ she told Elisha. And at last Elisha rose up and followed her.

“As they drew near to the house Gehazi met them, and he told them that he had laid the staff on the face of the child, but that he had not awakened.

“Then Elisha himself went alone into his own room, where the little boy lay, and shut the door. He prayed, and stretched himself tenderly over the child, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, and hands to hands, and the little cold body began to grow warm.

“Elisha stood up again then, and walked about, and prayed. Then, once more, he pressed the little child closely to him. And the boy sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes!

“Then Elisha called Gehazi, and said to him: ‘Fetch his mother!’

“And when she came, he told her: ‘Take up thy son!’

“Then the good and gracious lady of the Shu-

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nammites went in and bowed down, and knelt at the feet of Elisha; and, when she had bent before him in deep silence for a few minutes, she took her little living son in her arms and went out."

"Oh, how beautiful!" murmured Betty. "He made the dead boy live, didn't he, Uncle?"

"Yes. It was one of Elisha's greatest miracles."

Dick said that, while it was marvelous, the miracle of the oil was fully as great.

"What I mean is that, no human being to-day could do either one of them," he added.

"Son, your reasoning is excellent," approved Dick's father. "What impresses you the most in this story, Betty?"

"The dear little fellow who came to life," promptly replied Betty.

"And you, Dick?"

"Well, while the miracles are wonderful, and all that, the big thing to me is the wonderful faith of the gracious Shunammite lady," decided Dick thoughtfully. "Without that faith on her part I do not believe that Elisha could have done what he did for her."

"Fine, Dick. Splendid!" cried Mrs. Burroughs, and Uncle Jim's eyes lighted up with pride for his own son.

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“I think I have told enough stories for one day,” announced Uncle Jim. “Next time, but not now, I will tell you about ‘The Queen of Judah, the Story of a Royal Baby.’ Blue Eyes, you are interested in queens and I know you love babies, so I feel certain that you will love this one. Won’t you, Blue Eyes?”

There was no reply, and all eyes were instantly turned on Betty, who lay motionless with her yellow head pillowed on one arm.

Betty Burroughs was fast asleep.

THE QUEEN OF JUDAH

THE STORY OF A ROYAL BABY

“NO,” said Uncle Jim Burroughs next morning in response to Betty’s plea for another story.

“Please,” begged the little girl.

Uncle Jim shook his head.

“Any little girl who goes to sleep while I am telling her a story isn’t interested at all,” he declared with strong emphasis. “So you will have to do without a story — for the present,” he added.

“How long is ‘for the present’?” asked Betty, who was not to be denied.

“Well, it might be five minutes; then again it might be five days,” replied Uncle Jim. “I am inclined to think that ‘the present’ in this instance may be somewhere between the two.”

“Father, it is raining outdoors, and Betty and I can’t do anything at all except stay in the house,” reminded Dick.

“Six minutes is somewhere between the two.

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Two minutes of the six are already gone," announced Betty, keenly regarding the clock. "Mother. Please come in," she called to Mrs. Burroughs who was in the kitchen. "The Queen of Judah is coming this morning, and Uncle Jim is going to introduce us to her."

Mrs. Burroughs came in, wiping her hands on her apron, and laughing.

"What is it?" she asked.

"The time is up, Uncle Jim," reminded Betty, without giving anyone an opportunity to answer her mother's question. "Sit down, Mother and Dick," she added, drawing up a hassock and sitting down at Uncle Jim's feet.

Uncle Jim Burroughs threw up his hands in despair.

"What is a person to do?" he demanded. "Very well, you shall have the story. But I warn you that if you dare to go to sleep again while I am talking to you, I'll *never* tell you another story."

"Never, never!" repeated Betty. "I promise, Uncle Jim, never to do such a thing again." Betty smiled up so sweetly into his face that Uncle Jim leaned suddenly forward and touched her yellow curls with his lips.

"The queen that I am about to tell you of,"

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he said, "did not turn out very well, as you will learn in a few moments. I will now begin the story.

"King Ahab and Jezebel had a daughter who was called the Princess Athaliah," he said. "When she grew up she was married to the King of Judah. Very likely she brought great riches with her, for we know that the royal family to which Jezebel belonged owned many palaces, full of exquisitely carved wood, and seats of mother-of-pearl, and ivory couches inlaid with precious stones.

"When the new Queen Athaliah went to Jerusalem as a bride she lived in a beautiful house which had been built by Solomon for an Egyptian Princess who was one of his wives. And, strangely enough, this house was made of cedar-trees which the servants of Athaliah's own people, the people of Sidon, had cut down for Solomon in the high sunny woods of Mount Lebanon, far away in the north.

"So Athaliah lived in her cedar-palace, and looked out of the windows at the peacocks and fountains in the queen's garden. There were hundreds of horses to draw her chariots, and big camels who munched straw and barley in the stables. Her son Ahaziah grew up there, and

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he ruled over Judah after his father, Athaliah's husband, was dead; and this queen, whose people, as you know, had worshiped the sun and the moon, tried to teach the young King Ahaziah to do the same. But a great captain of the army, called Jehu, killed Ahaziah, and then the queen-mother began to rule at Jerusalem herself.

"Ahaziah had been her only son, and she was afraid that the people would crown one of the other young princes as their King, and that then she herself would be left without any power at all. So she had all the royal children secretly put to death, set herself upon the throne of David, placed his crown upon her head, and took his sceptre in her hand."

"Oh, what a wicked queen!" cried Betty. "How could she do such a terrible thing?"

"Many queens since then have been almost if not fully as cruel," Uncle Jim informed her. "You will learn all about them in your history at school."

"I don't want to know," averred Betty. "To hear such things makes me want to cry, and I don't want to."

There was a laugh at Betty's expense, then Uncle Jim resumed his story.

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“There was, at the Temple, a High-Priest called Jehoiada, and his wife was of the family of the Kings. She took one tiny royal baby, only a year old, and hid him, with his nurse, in a room in one of the priests’ houses that clustered round the holy building, and there the little baby stayed, concealed from everybody, for six years.

“He must have been rather like another tiny Samuel, as he trotted about the cedar-roofed rooms after the kind High-Priest who brought him up. Jehoiada watched him, and loved him, and taught him very carefully indeed. For the High-Priest meant this little child to be crowned King of Judah, as was his lawful right.

“The little boy’s name was Joash, or Jehoash, and, on his seventh birthday, the great day came. The High-Priest brought him from his nursery, and took him along dim and wonderful corridors, lit with jewelled lamps. Then the little child found himself among carved pillars, and high golden screens, and purple hangings, with a sweet smell of spices lingering in the air. And there stood a group of grave men, dressed in armor, who gazed down upon him earnestly, as the High-Priest, holding Joash by the hand, told them that here was the only living son of Jerusalem’s lawful Kings.

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"They all took a vow of loyalty to the wondering child, and went away, and Joash trotted back to his nurse, and you may be sure he told her all about it."

"What a sweet and wonderful child," murmured Betty. "And what splendid people Jehoiada and his wife must have been."

"Little Joash does seem to be quite a promising youngster," observed Dick so wisely that Uncle Jim and Mrs. Burroughs laughed heartily. "And the High-Priests acted like regular men," he added without heeding the laugh.

"Yes, they did, Dick," agreed Uncle Jim. "But hear the rest of the story, Son:

"The following Sabbath morning came a great, though quiet, movement of troops up to the King's house, and the Queen's house, and the House of God. The people who were making ready to go to worship saw only what was quite usual — the door-keepers of the Temple massing together to exchange their watch. But these men were all soldiers of the captains who had taken the oath of loyalty, and they were gathering in companies to defend the tiny King.

"Inside the Temple a wonderful thing was happening.

Once more the kind, strong High-Priest went

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to where little Joash waited in the chamber with his nurse. The child was fresh and sweet and fair in fine linen garments, with a little royal robe upon his shoulders; and again Jehoiada led him through the lamp-lit corridors into the Temple, where a number of people had gathered together for worship, not knowing what was going to happen on this wonderful Sabbath.

“Don’t you see that scene, children? It was a beautiful scene, and a big scene for a very little fellow. And you can imagine the curiosity of the people gathered there, but for what purpose they did not know. Their curiosity was reflected in their faces, and in the way they so eagerly leaned forward and stared wonderingly at the sweet little child. No doubt he, too, was wondering what it was all about.”

“Don’t you think he knew, Father?” asked Dick.

“How could he comprehend it? In the first place he was too young to fully understand. Again, he must have been badly frightened facing that great throng. I presume, though the Bible does not tell us so, that he realized that something very great was about to take place, and that it concerned him. But, as I have said, he was too young to understand.”

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"Still, he was not too young to be a king," murmured Dick.

"Little Joash, no doubt, was interested in all the wonderful and beautiful things to be seen in that holy place," continued the story teller. "Among them were the heads and horns of twelve oxen made of shining brass and facing north, south, east and west. They held on their great glittering shoulders a gigantic bowl in which were carved the waves of a golden sea. This mighty bowl was shaped like a cup, and lilies were carved upon the rim. From end to end of the Temple stood the faithful captains, shoulder to shoulder, in a silent, watchful row. Every captain had a shield and a spear, which had once belonged to King David, upon his breast and in his right hand; and right down this long row of rigid warriors the High-Priest led the little startled child."

"The poor little dear. What a shame to frighten him so," exclaimed Betty warmly.

"Rather hard on the little fellow," nodded Dick. "Why could they not have left him with his nurse?"

"Because the occasion was too great. That would not have been possible," answered Uncle Jim.

"On the other side of the Temple court was a

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hushed and waiting crowd of people, surprised into deep silence by what they saw.

“Jehoiada took King David’s crown and set it upon little Joash’s head, and, for a moment, laid the big parchment rolls, which held the list of the people, in his chubby arms. Then the High-Priest poured the sacred, sweet-smelling oil upon the boy’s soft hair and turned him to face the people; and the men who were standing ready with their trumpets blew a great blast, the people clapped their hands, and right up to the roof of the Temple rang the mighty shout:

“‘God save the King!’”

“And God heard that shout, too. How glad he must have been,” exclaimed Betty excitedly.

“Where was Queen Athaliah all this time?” inquired Dick.

“Queen Athaliah, from her garden of peacocks, heard the shouts and the trumpetings inside the Temple, and called up her body-guard and her maids-in-waiting, and went to the House of the Lord.

“The people made way for the Queen’s procession, which passed through them to where the armed captains watched in their silent ranks in front of the shining oxen of brass. Queen Athaliah looked, and behold, in the royal place by the

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King's pillar stood a small, grave, wondering child, crowned with a crown of gold. Even as she caught sight of him, the trumpets sounded once more, and again the people shouted:

“‘God save the King!’

“Queen Athaliah turned round angrily to the crowd behind. ‘Treason!’ she cried in a shrill, high voice. ‘Treason!’ She thought that her subjects might yet rally to her; but no one stirred. She signalled fiercely to her body-guard, but they looked at the captains by the altar, with the swords and spears of David, and they drooped their heads. Then the High-Priest raised his hand commandingly.

“‘Take her!’ he said to the captains. ‘Take her away from this holy place, and let her be put to death!’

“So the captains closed round Athaliah and marched out of the Temple, with the wicked Queen in their midst. They led her down the long hill up which the horses were driven to the King's stables, and out of the shadows of the Temple into the sunshine on the slope below. And there they put her to death, for had she not killed the royal princes six years before?”

“What else could a cruel queen like Athaliah expect?” ventured Dick.

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"Yes. She had committed a great crime, and, like all who sin, her punishment followed," said Uncle Jim.

"Won't you tell us more about Joash, Uncle Jim?" begged Betty. "Did he grow up, and was he good and noble, and everything?"

"Yes, Blue Eyes. He proved to be all that you could wish him to be. Joash, the little King, the sweet child that Jehoiada had saved from death, and reared, and finally led to the throne, grew up wise and good under the tender teaching of the High-Priest of God. The boy grew to be a great and good King, of whom I may tell you a story at another time. I will tell you just another story to-day, but that will be after my return, for I am going out with Dick for a walk in the rain."

"I'll go, too," cried Betty, her eyes aglow.

Mrs. Burroughs said "no," and though Betty pouted for a moment, the sunshine of her happy nature soon drove away the clouds.

"What is the story to be, Uncle Jim?" asked Betty, brushing a hand across her eyes and smiling up at him.

"I think we will call it, 'The Little Captive Maid, the Story of a Mighty Captain's Servant,'" promised Uncle Jim Burroughs.

THE LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID

THE STORY OF A MIGHTY CAPTAIN'S SERVANT

DICK and his father did not return to the house until late in the afternoon. Wearing rubber boots and heavy raincoats, they had plodded through mud and rain for hours, finally returning home with faces flushed and eyes aglow. It had been a glorious day for father and son.

"It was great, Betty," cried Dick as they stamped into the kitchen and threw off their wet coats and boots. Mrs. Burroughs did not permit wet boots in her parlor.

"Yes. You look it," retorted Betty a little scornfully, in reply to her cousin's remark. "If you get sick, Dickie Burroughs, don't you dare ask me to be your nurse."

"I won't," promised Dick in a tone of voice that made Betty flush. She was about to make a sharp retort, but thinking better of it, turned and walked into the parlor and sat down. She waited there for nearly an hour for Uncle Jim

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and Dick, and when they finally did come in Betty pretended to be asleep.

Dick tickled her ear with a feather that he had picked up in the kitchen where Mrs. Burroughs was preparing their dinner and supper in one.

Betty sprang up, uttering a merry peal of laughter, Cousin Dick and beloved Uncle Jim joining in the merriment.

“For your good nature, you shall have a bed-time story to-night — if you wish it,” promised Uncle Jim, accompanying the words with one of those rare smiles that always brought sunshine into the hearts of everyone about him.

“Wish it? You know I do, you dear old uncle. Do you know what I was thinking while you and Dick were out to-day?”

“Wishing you were with us,” suggested Dick.

“Well, yes. But that wasn’t all. I was thinking that if I were a queen, rich like Athaliah, and Uncle Jim were poor like our minister, I would hire Uncle and pay him heaps and heaps of money to work for me. I’d give him a golden chariot and all the white horses he —”

“Work for you? Doing what?” demanded Cousin Dick.

“Just telling me wonderful stories, that’s all,” answered Betty.

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"Mercy me!" cried Uncle Jim. "Blue Eyes, I fear that my stories would give out; then, alas, the beautiful queen would have me beheaded," laughed Uncle Jim. "As it is I shall have to think up a fresh supply or else go back home."

"You haven't told them all yet, Uncle. I just know you haven't," insisted Betty.

Uncle Jim admitted that he had a few more stories stowed away in the back of his head, and promised that, after they had had their dinner, he would tell them the story of the Captive Maid.

It was some time after they had finished their supper that Uncle Jim announced his readiness to begin.

The late twilight covered the fields and the trees, and a full moon was shining brightly after the rain, turning the raindrops on the leaves into millions of sparkling diamonds, so Uncle Jim and the children went out to the porch, where they were soon joined by Mrs. Burroughs.

"This would be a great night for Queen Athaliah," observed Dick, sitting down on the top step of the porch and gazing up into the sky.

"How is that, Son?" asked his father.

"Because the Queen was a moon-worshiper."

Uncle Jim coughed.

"We will now begin our story," he said. "It

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is a fine little story, too. You children know I have to tell you that to get your interest stirred up before I begin."

"All Bible stories are fine stories," interposed Mrs. Burroughs.

"That's so, Auntie, but the telling isn't always so fine," teased Dick, stealing a quick glance at his father, who ignoring Dick's remark began the story:

"The Bible tells how foreign armies came into the Kingdom of Israel," said Uncle Jim; "among them the armies of the King of Syria, whose country was not far from the mountains of Lebanon, where the spreading cedar-trees grew. He was always sending bands of soldiers into Samaria, who stole the people's sheep and oxen, and sometimes the young boys and girls for slaves. Among the children who were taken away was a little maid.

"This little maid had fallen into the hands of a captain called Naaman, who was strong and valiant, and a great favorite with his royal master, the Syrian King. Naaman gave the child to his wife, a rich and kind lady, to be her small servant, and to wait upon her in her beautiful house at Damascus.

"The little girl was quite happy, and soon

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learned to love her new master and mistress; for, although they had taken her far from her own people, they treated her very well. And often, as she helped her mistress to dress, or brought her fruit and wine to eat and drink, she would prattle about the land of Samaria, where the Holy Tent had once stood on Shiloh, and where the ivory palace built by Ahab still gleamed among the oaks of the high hills.

“Now, although Naaman was such a strong man, and a brave captain of soldiers, he had a very terrible disease called leprosy.”

“What is leprosy?” Betty wanted to know.

“A disease that, in time, leads to death. It made Naaman’s skin all dry and white, and he knew that soon he would waste away, and that he would be shunned by everyone because of the terrible disease,” answered Uncle Jim.

“The little Samaritan maid’s heart was full of sympathy for her master’s misfortune. She used to look at him sorrowfully whenever he came her way, for she knew that his wife felt dreadfully unhappy about this sad disease. And one day, when she was with her mistress, the child said how much she wished that Naaman were in Samaria, for there was a great prophet there who would cure him of his sickness.

THE LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID

“The rich Syrian lady began quickly to ask the child questions, which she answered as well as she could. So Naaman got to hear that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal every kind of disease. Then the King of Syria himself was told of this wonderful man. But he took it for granted that the worker of miracles could be no other than a King.

“So he wrote a letter to the King of Israel asking him to make Naaman healthy and strong again. He gave this letter to the Syrian captain, and told him to take it to Samaria himself.

“Naaman said good-bye to his wife, and set out in a beautiful chariot drawn by five strong horses, taking a lot of silver and gold, and fine silk clothing, as presents to the monarch who had it in his power to make sick people well again.

“The little maid watched him go. But she herself knew nothing of the King in his palace, with his courtiers and musicians about him. She only knew of the Holy Man who wandered in his sandals over the mountains, or slept in a little cave on the side of a hill.”

“Who was the great prophet that the maid told the captain’s wife about?” asked Betty.

“Elisha, my dear. You should have known that,” rebuked Uncle Jim.

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"I didn't know, either, Father," spoke up Dick, whereupon Betty smiled and nodded her head at Cousin Dick.

"Naaman, all grand in his chariot, went driving up to the palace gates when he had reached his journey's end, and he gave the letter, rather haughtily, to the King of Israel. The King, when he had read it, was in despair. 'For,' he said, 'who am I to cure a man of leprosy? Only God can do such things! The King of Syria is seeking a quarrel with me, that, once more, he may make war upon my country and myself.'

"Who could tell what would have happened, after this, if Elisha had not heard that a great captain had come, in a chariot with horses, all the way from Syria, to be cured of leprosy? Happily the prophet was told of the proud and determined visitor; and he sent a quiet message, bidding Naaman leave the palace and come into the open mountains. So by and by the big Syrian chariot thundered up to the door of the small dwelling-place where, at the moment, the prophet lived.

"How glad the little maid would have been if she could have seen the chariot there! for, often and often, she must have thought of her kind foreign master looking for the holy man of God among the vineyards of her own home.

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“Outside the house Naaman waited. He expected Elisha would come out to him, stretch forth a powerful wand like a magician’s, make loud cries to God, and so perform a wonderful and miraculous cure for everybody to see. But the prophet did not even stir from the chamber where he sat. He just sent out a message.

“ ‘Go and wash seven times in the river Jordan, and thy flesh shall come back to thee, and thou shalt be well! ’

“Then Naaman was very angry and went right away from the little home in the hills. If he had been told to wash in one of the great rivers of his own country he would not have been so offended. But what was the river Jordan — what were all the waters of Israel to a captain of the mighty Syrian King? Naaman was inclined to go straight home again, but his servants persuaded him against this hurried return.

“ ‘If the prophet had told our master to do a great thing, he would have done it! ’ they said. ‘Why not, then, do a thing as small and easy as this? ’

“So Naaman was persuaded out of his anger, and he went down to the Jordan instead of hurrying home. His servants helped him to take off his fine clothes, and stood on the bank, while,

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seven times, he dipped beneath the warm and limpid waters of the river of Israel; and when he came up from the stream, treading the flowers of the bank under foot, his flesh was as fair and soft and beautiful as the flesh of the little maid herself, through whose innocent prattle and loving memory of her own good Israelite prophet the mighty captain of Syrian soldiers had been made whole.

“And that is the end of the little story,” said Uncle Jim in conclusion.

“A beautiful story, too, it is, Uncle Jim,” was Betty’s reply. “What became of the dear little maid?”

Uncle Jim confessed that he did not know, and also that he did not even know her name, as the Bible did not give it.

“Then Naaman really was cured by bathing in the Jordan, Father?” questioned Dick.

“That was the method employed by Elisha to work the cure. It is probable that the prophet did it that way to humble the mighty captain.”

“And I presume the captain was so thankful at being made whole, that he believed in Elisha’s God after that?” suggested Dick.

“I think not,” answered Uncle Jim. “Now

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please run along to bed, children. If there is time I will tell you a story to-morrow."

"Oh, please tell it to us now! Please do, Uncle Jim," begged Betty. "I know I shall never be able to wait until to-morrow."

Uncle Jim shook his head and smiled indulgently.

"You can, at least, tell us what the story is about, Father," suggested Dick.

"No! I will tell you this much, however, — it is about a King who got into great trouble because he loved himself too well, and that is every word I am going to say about it to-night," declared Uncle Jim firmly. "Good-night, Blue Eyes! Good-night, Son."

A KING WHO WORSHIPED HIMSELF

THE STORY OF BABYLON

“**T**HE story! The story!” cried Betty, as she ran out to the orchard where she espied Dick and his father strolling back and forth, enjoying the sweet morning air. Betty was still rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.

“Why, Blue Eyes, we haven’t had breakfast yet,” protested Uncle Jim.

“I know. But my appetite for the story is greater than my appetite for breakfast. I want to hear about the man who was in love with himself. I never heard of such a thing in all my life. Did you, Dick?”

Dick nodded and smiled ever so little. He had heard many wonderful stories of the Bible people, told by his father in many a ramble over field and through forest, and in the quiet of their own happy little home.

“If it really is so serious as that, Betty, perhaps I might tell you the story. What about breakfast, though? Your mother will feel that

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we are not quite fair to her if we keep her waiting.”

“It is all right, Uncle Jim. Mother says it is, that she will wait breakfast until we come in,” urged Betty, now thoroughly awake, her face flushed and eyes sparkling.

“Very well,” agreed Uncle Jim, surrendering to Betty’s insistent demand.

Betty promptly sat down with her back against a tree and composed herself to be entertained. Dick and his father also sat down.

“I think we will call the story ‘The King Who Worshiped Himself,’” began Uncle Jim. “I don’t believe Dick has heard this particular story, but I know he will be interested in it.

“This King, children, reigned about six hundred years before Christ came to earth, a long, long time ago, and in many ways he was a most remarkable man.”

“Do I know him? What was his name, Uncle?” interrupted Betty.

“I hardly think you know him, Blue Eyes, though you undoubtedly have read of him in the Bible. His name was Nebuchadnezzar.”

Betty nodded, but did not speak. Instead she fixed her blue eyes on Uncle Jim’s face, and they were full of eagerness.

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"It is not an easy name to speak, and a somewhat difficult one to spell. I remember what a time I had in learning to spell it when I was a youth," said Uncle Jim with a chuckle.

"We must get on with our story, then hasten in to breakfast. There is no doubt that Nebuchadnezzar was a remarkable man, a clever man, for he accomplished many wonderful things. This King, among other things, built a city that the world has been talking about ever since. Does either of you children know the name of it?" questioned the story-teller.

Betty shook her blond head vigorously. Dick pondered, but, like his companion, was unable to name the city.

"It's name was Babylon," Uncle Jim informed them.

"Of course! How stupid of me," said Dick, out of patience with himself.

"Minds are made to use, you know, Son," reproved his father kindly. "This King was a strong man, and undoubtedly was a hard master, with a great mastery of men, for he made everybody do exactly what he wished them to do, and whether or not they liked to do his bidding."

"I don't believe I like that King," murmured Betty.

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“Nebuchadnezzar, besides being great in building a city, was a great warrior. He not only ruled over Babylonia, but in his wars he fought and conquered Egypt. He took Jerusalem and carried away many thousands of Jewish people into his home country.”

“I call that a cruel thing to do. I don’t think a man who could do a thing like that is so very great after all,” protested Betty.

“It was wrong, of course,” agreed Uncle Jim. “In spite of this we must measure the man by what he accomplished, for he succeeded in a wonderful way in almost everything that he undertook. All these successes, however, seem to have turned Nebuchadnezzar’s head. At least he grew very proud and self-confident, and lost no opportunity to boast about what he had done and what he proposed to do.”

“He bragged about it,” murmured Betty, nodding her blond head.

This made Uncle Jim smile. He then resumed his story.

“Through all these successes, the King thought so much about himself and his achievements that he nearly forgot God, which was not good for him, and a man so great as he should have known that, to forget or even to neglect

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God, would sooner or later bring its punishment.

“In the city of Babylon this King really had something worth boasting about—something more noble than war—and the city was the pride of his life. He had put all his wealth and his brilliant mind into the making of the city. He had a burning ambition to make it the most wonderful city in the world, and I think he succeeded. When it was finished he invited all the kings near and far to come and see it. Children, can you not imagine the pride with which he showed them his city? Taking his visitors to the top of one of the high towers, where a view of the entire city could be had, Nebuchadnezzar would proudly demand: ‘Is not this the great Babylon which *I* have builded?’”

“Mother says that only persons with little brains are conceited,” interjected Betty.

“Won’t you tell us what this city looked like?” requested Dick.

Uncle Jim replied that he was wondering why the children did not ask this question.

“It was a beautiful city,” he said. “It was beautiful even as we look upon cities now and call them beautiful, but they are not as Babylon was.

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“This great city was built along both sides of the river Euphrates, and was walled in by walls on either side, sixty miles long. Can you imagine a city sixty miles long?”

The two children looked their amazement.

“There were a hundred gates in the walls, each gate made of solid brass, which was kept brightly polished and which blazed like fires under the tropical sunlight.

“Streets, straight and broad, divided the city into six hundred and seventy-six squares, containing many buildings and numerous parks and pleasure grounds. You will agree with me that Nebuchadnezzar was a fine engineer when I tell you that the two sides of the river were joined with a beautiful bridge and a tunnel under it.”

“Wonderful!” breathed the two rapt listeners.

Dick wished to know about the King’s palace, if he had such a thing in his great city.

“He did, Son, but it is practically impossible to describe it so that we may get a clear picture of the building. We do know that it covered more than six miles of ground and was decorated with statues of men and animals on the outside. Within, the palace was furnished with all the luxurious fittings of that time, and filled with

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vessels of gold and silver that had been brought from neighboring countries.

“One of the most notable features of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace was its hanging gardens. They were, and still are in history, the wonder of the world.

“Here is a peculiar thing in connection with Babylon, and one that shows the power of the man to overcome obstacles. The city was built on a flat plain, from which level country extended away for many miles. Nebuchadnezzar did not wholly like the outlook so he had an enormous mountain made, with terraces rising one above the other. He had trees brought from great distances and planted on this mountain, and the King took his walks on the terraces under the shade of the trees, and thought about what a great man he was.

“Nothing seemed impossible to this man,” resumed Uncle Jim after a moment’s thought. “At least he seemed to believe that nothing was impossible. Remember, though, that thousands of slaves were at hand to do his bidding, slaves who toiled under stern masters without pay and probably with more or less cruel treatment.

“In all this success, as I have already told you, children, the King forgot that God gave him life,

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gave him his remarkable mind, his genius, and permitted him to succeed. Nebuchadnezzar forgot it all, and worshiped only himself. After a time he made himself believe that he himself was a god and that everybody should bow down and worship him. What he did next will interest you."

"Something foolish, I presume," nodded Betty.

"Yes. That perhaps describes it as well as anything that I can say," replied Uncle Jim smilingly.

"The King had a huge statue of himself made. This he placed on a great pedestal on a broad flat plain, and on a certain day everybody was obliged to go to this plain and stand about the big statue. Many musicians were stationed on a high platform, and the King commanded that, when the trumpets began to blow, the vast throng must bow their heads and worship the image. This was to be a sign that they worshiped him."

"Oh! That was terrible," cried Betty.

"Yes," agreed Uncle Jim. "And only three of all that multitude refused to obey the King's command. This disturbed the King very much, but taking it all in all he was quite well satisfied with the worship of the multitude, and with himself."

"A hard lesson was coming to Nebuchadnezzar, as you children can well imagine, for God was

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angry, and his punishment was severe, for the King had sought to make himself a god. Do you know what that punishment was?"

Dick and Betty shook their heads.

"Because he did not give God the glory, God's decree was:

" 'They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven.'

"Nebuchadnezzar was smitten with a terrible form of madness. He was made to believe that he was a bullock. He walked on all fours as if he were a four-legged animal, and ate grass like an ox. Like the animal that he thought he was, the King never looked up while his punishment lasted. That, children, was the punishment that came to the man who tried to be a god, and gave not God the glory for the blessings that were his," finished Uncle Jim.

Dick averred that it served the wicked king right. Betty admitted that the punishment was just, but said it was terrible to think of.

"What next, Uncle?" Betty then demanded.

"Breakfast!" replied Uncle Jim with emphasis. "There is your mother at the door beckoning to us. The next story will be called, 'The Prophet in the Well.' Hurry along, children."

THE PROPHET IN THE WELL

THE STORY OF A BRAVE MAN

BETTY could hardly wait until breakfast was over for the next story, and she was keenly disappointed when Uncle Jim told her there would be no more stories until later in the day. You see, Betty, though a sweet and lovable girl, was an impatient one.

“Why not, Uncle Jim?” she pouted.

Uncle Jim said that he and Dick must walk over to the post office, then there would be letters to read and answer and perhaps talk over, and he suggested that, while they were absent, Betty assist her mother with the morning work.

Betty nodded and sighed. Just the same she began work at once, first helping with the dishes, then making up her bed and sweeping and dusting her room. After a little she was heard singing at her work, and Mrs. Burroughs smiled happily at the sound.

It seemed but a short time ere Dick called to her from the yard, and asked her to come down,

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but Betty said she had not yet finished, which was better still. There was no further urging for a story from the little girl that morning, and even after dinner she did not ask for a story.

"I think we have a very good little girl to-day," chuckled Uncle Jim, nodding to Mrs. Burroughs.

"Very," agreed Betty's mother.

"It looks cool and comfortable on the back porch this afternoon, and I feel as if I should like to tell you two children a little story, the one I promised you this morning," said Uncle Jim.

"Goodie!" cried Betty so eagerly that everyone laughed.

"This," said Uncle Jim, after they were all seated on the porch, "is the story of a great and good man who was determined to do right, though to do so seemed certain death. It is the story of Jeremiah.

"Jeremiah was a prophet. He was a shy man, and for that reason it must have been hard for him to do right in the face of what he had to meet. He did it just the same, even though it got him into great trouble.

"The prophet lived in Judah, which lay between two bigger countries, one of which wished to march its army through Judah and attack Egypt. This warlike country was Babylon, of

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which you have already heard, though there was now a new king on the throne.

“The King of Judah was a weak king, and neither he nor his officers could decide what they ought to do about letting the Babylonians go through their country. They did not think of asking God for his advice. In spite of this, God tried to help them by sending Jeremiah to advise them. This the men of Judah resented. Some favored fetching the army from Egypt to fight the Babylonians who were then attacking the city of Jerusalem.

“‘This is bad advice,’ declared Jeremiah. ‘That is trusting man, not God. God says submit yourselves to the Babylonians, and your city will be saved, and he will overrule your doing this for your good.’

“The officers of the King’s army were very angry, and accused Jeremiah of being a traitor to his country. They said he was trying to give it up to its enemies. The people soon became aroused against Jeremiah, and the excitement became so great that he decided it were best for him to go away for a time.

“As he was leaving the city, guards at the city gate seized him, declaring that he was about to go to their enemies and tell them how to conquer

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the city. Jeremiah protested that he was not a traitor, but they would not listen, and dragging him away threw the prophet into a dungeon, and neglected him until he was nearly starved to death."

"How cruel of them!" cried Betty. "Why did not God save him?"

"God did, as you will see, my dear. Jeremiah managed to get a message to the King who directed that the prophet be fed."

"And the King saved him, didn't he?" interrupted Dick.

"No. The King, as I have told you, was a weak king, and the officers determined to kill the prophet, and talked against him to the King. Having won the King over to their side, they proceeded to the prison, took Jeremiah out and threw him into a deep well. They reasoned that no one could get at him there, and that he would soon starve to death."

"Did the poor man drown?" asked Betty anxiously.

"No, child. There was no water in the well, but at the bottom there was deep mud, and overpowering odors that made it a terrible place for a human being. Jeremiah sank into the mud to his armpits, but by stretching out his arms and

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holding them in that position he kept himself from sinking wholly into the mire. You children may wonder if God had deserted his prophet, but you must know that God never deserts those who are faithful to him and to his commands.

“It came about in this way. Some of the women in the palace heard of the cruel thing that had been done to Jeremiah. They sent a black servant to find him. This servant’s name was Ebed-Melech. Ebed, after considerable searching, discovered where the prophet had been put, and his heart was so touched with pity that he acted at once to save the unhappy prophet in the well.

“Ebed went to the King, who did not know what the officers had done, and the King, when told of the peril of God’s prophet, became alarmed. He ordered Ebed to go get Jeremiah out of the pit and take sufficient men with him to accomplish the big task.

“The black servant first lowered food to the nearly starved man. He also had with him clean clothes for the prophet. Getting the prisoner out was not an easy task, and Ebed had to do considerable thinking to find a way to accomplish it, for Jeremiah was stuck hard and fast in the mud.”

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Dick interrupted to ask why Ebed did not get a ladder. Uncle Jim replied that he did not know whether or not they had any such thing in those days.

“Two ropes with loops were finally let down and Jeremiah was directed to put his arms through them, but the prophet was so fast in the mud that the pull of the men on the ropes was more than he could endure.

“Ebed, even though he was a black man, had a good head, for he immediately hurried away, soon returning with a bundle of soft rags and old clothes. These he let down to the prophet with instructions to put them under his arm-pits and around his arms, so that the ropes might not hurt him. Then when this had been done, the men began to pull on the ropes. They felt Jeremiah coming ever so little at first and were greatly encouraged.

“Think how Jeremiah must have suffered. But he never uttered a cry, nor a word of complaint. Inch by inch the men drew him up until at last they had him free from the mud in which he was slowly dying.

“It was but a few moments' work after that to get him out of the well. The kind servant then bathed Jeremiah and put clean clothing on

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him, gave him more food, and sent him on his way to continue the work that God had laid out for him."

"How wonderful!" breathed Betty.

Dick asked if the King's officers bothered the prophet after that.

"Not so far as I am aware. They probably realized that Jeremiah was protected by a higher power and that it were well to let him alone in the future," replied Uncle Jim.

"What a brave man he must have been in spite of his being so timid, as you say he was," said Dick thoughtfully.

"He was God's servant and doing God's work, my son," answered Uncle Jim. "Do that always and you never will know fear, for God, while he may permit you to suffer a time for reasons that are beyond you, will always be at your side to strengthen you for your ordeal and to save you at the end." Uncle Jim's voice was solemn as he spoke the words, and both Betty and Dick were very thoughtful.

"Now run along, children. Have a good play and talk for the rest of the day. If there is time I will tell you a different story to-morrow — a story that will thrill you and stir you. This story is one that I consider one of the most

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fascinating of any of the great Bible stories. I think we will call the story 'A Prince of Jerusalem,' and I will warrant that neither of you can guess what the story is about," finished Uncle Jim smilingly.

A PRINCE OF JERUSALEM

THE STORY OF DANIEL AND THE LIONS

WHEN Uncle Jim returned from a call at the post office next morning there followed a long quiet talk with Mrs. Burroughs.

“I think it will be wise not to tell the children until later in the day, perhaps not until morning,” suggested Mrs. Burroughs. “If you do tell them it will spoil their day, in spite of the good news that we have for them. You surely did bring me good news in the mail this morning, James. As for yourself, you can’t even imagine how unhappy our little Betty will be.”

“Yes. I know. But she will forget all about it when you tell her the good news, Margaret,” declared Uncle Jim, his eyes twinkling as he observed the happy smile on Mrs. Burroughs’ face.

“You will tell them this evening,” she directed.

“Very good. Just as you think best. This evening, then, they shall have the story and the news,” nodded Uncle Jim.

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“What are you two talking about so mysteriously?” demanded Betty suspiciously, as she entered the parlor with Dick.

“That, Blue Eyes, is a deep, dark secret,” answered Uncle Jim teasingly. “By the way, I think I shall put off our story until evening — after supper, as I shall be rather busy to-day. I have to go over to town to see a lawyer, and may be away for some time. You children have all the fun you can while I am away.”

Dick and Betty were disappointed, and Betty was filled with curiosity, not unmixed with suspicion. She scented mystery in the air. Soon after that Uncle Jim went over to the village and did not return home until nearly supper time. Immediately after they had finished the evening meal, the little household gathered in the parlor, the children full of eagerness for the promised story.

Uncle Jim’s kindly blue eyes regarded Dick and Betty soberly, then, without further delay, he began the story of “A Prince of Jerusalem”:

“In the days of long ago there was a magnificent city called Babylon, through the middle of which flowed the river Euphrates. The King’s palace was especially fine, and the different monarchs who lived there were very proud of

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the splendors of their city, and often spoke of it as Babylon the Great. You will recall, children, that I described this city to you yesterday," said Uncle Jim.

"But among the treasures of Babylon were many things that had been stolen from the Temple at Jerusalem—pillars of brass, ornaments of silver, and an exquisite screen carved to look like pomegranate fruit and flowers. For the armies of Babylon had conquered the city of David, and made prisoners of many of her people.

"One of these prisoners was a beautiful boy called Daniel, who was as fair to look at as David had been, and full of the quiet wisdom of God.

"This boy from Jerusalem was really a little Prince in his own country, for he was of the family of the Jewish Kings. The courtiers and governors of the great palace at Babylon brought him up very carefully, for they wanted to make him like one of themselves. But Daniel never forgot his own people, and the God about whom he had learned in the lovely Temple that held the Ark. And as he grew older his wisdom and his goodness increased, so that he was able to do things that other people could not do; and, like Joseph, he could tell the meaning of dreams.

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“ Well, as time went on, the King of Babylon inquired what had become of the beautiful boy from Jerusalem and his other little royal companions. So the courtiers brought them to him as he sat on his throne.

“ The boys had grown up into young men now, and the King found them, in wisdom and understanding, ten times better than all the old learned magicians and teachers that he kept about him at his court. So he always had the young men near to him; and Daniel, who was wiser than any of the others, became at last the head of the company of counsellors. He was named ‘ Master of the Magicians,’ and he wore a beautiful scarlet robe, and a glittering gold chain hung round his neck and fell almost to the hem of the crimson gown.

“ He stayed at the court in great pomp and state during the reigns of two Kings. He explained to them the mysterious power of Jehovah, and told them what was right and what was wrong. So the Kings said of him that the spirit of the gods was in him, and that no secret was hidden from his eyes.

“ Then a King came to the throne of Babylon who was called Darius; and Daniel stayed with Darius, and helped and strengthened him.

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Darius was ruler over many people beyond Babylon; and among these people were the Medes and Persians. They all looked to Darius — who was a Mede himself by birth — to do wisely and justly in the land. So he set a hundred and twenty princes over the whole kingdom, and three presidents over the princes; and Daniel was the chief president of all.

“But, as so often happens, the hundred and twenty princes and the two other presidents grew jealous of Daniel and plotted to destroy him. They said:

“He does no wrong! He is faithful and true, and the people love him! We can only do him harm through the law of his God!’

“So they went to Darius, and praised his kingly greatness, and his power of making everybody happy, and said they had thought of a way by which he could make himself still more popular.

“‘O King Darius!’ they said, ‘let no one, for thirty days, ask favors of anyone but thee! Let no one petition either God or man for help except thy great and glorious self! Make a decree that this be so and that whoever disobeys shall be thrown into the den of lions! Write it in thine own handwriting and seal it with thine own seal!’

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“So King Darius, quite unsuspecting, and believing that the hundred and twenty princes and the two presidents were advising him in all purity of heart, wrote the decree and sealed it with his seal; and it became a law of the Medes and Persians, which laws were never altered or changed.

“Daniel, like everybody else, heard about the new order given by King Darius. But he just smiled quietly to himself and went to the open windows of his house, and prayed there three times a day, as usual, with his face set towards Jerusalem. All the people in the street below saw the master of the magicians, the greatest ruler in the land after Darius himself, quietly kneeling in his window in his scarlet robe and golden chain, and making petitions to God in defiance of the unalterable command of the King.

“Then, in great triumph, the princes and presidents hurried to Darius, and told him that Daniel — the favored and honored Daniel — had himself broken a law of the Medes and Persians! Darius saw how he had been tricked, and his heart was nearly broken; and until the sun went down he tried to persuade his counsellors to let him withdraw the decree, but they would not.

“So then, at sunset, the King sent for Daniel,

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and told him that he must be cast into the den of lions. Daniel answered nothing, and the sad procession, headed by the King, went from the throne-room down the steps to the great strong den where the royal lions were kept. And Daniel was thrown into the midst of them.

“But, even as the men flung him to the savage tawny beasts, that watched from their corners with wide mysterious eyes, the King’s voice broke out in a great cry of faith and hope, as he called to the magician whom he loved:

“‘Thy God, whom thou servest continually, *He* will deliver thee!’ cried the sad King. And then a great stone was brought, and rolled in front of the door of the den, and the King sealed it with his own signet ring, and went miserably away.

“All night long Darius lay tossing on his bed. He had neither food nor drink, and ordered his musicians to keep away from him. He thought of nothing but Daniel, and very early in the morning he left his fine bed-chamber and hurried down the steps again to the terrible den; and he cried out in anguish:

“‘O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?’

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“And then, out of the depths of the den, came Daniel’s own voice:

“‘O King, live forever! My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me!’

“Then the King, with great joy, sent for his servants and the keepers, and they opened the den, and Daniel came out. And Darius ordered those who had accused him to be thrown to the lions in his place; and the mighty monarch proclaimed throughout his whole kingdom the power of the God of Daniel, who could work great marvels, and had delivered His faithful servant from the lions.

“That, children, is the end of the story,” announced Uncle Jim, in a tone so quiet that the children glanced at him inquiringly.

Betty wished to know if Daniel were not frightened nearly to death, all alone with the ferocious beasts. And Dick said that, had he been in Daniel’s place, it wouldn’t have been necessary for the lions to bite him. “I should have died of fright,” he confessed.

“No,” said Uncle Jim in answer to Betty’s question. “Daniel was not afraid. He placed his faith in God, and God protected him from all harm, just as he will protect you if you will

A PRINCE OF JERUSALEM

but believe in him with all your heart and all your soul."

"I do," murmured Betty.

"Children, I have news for you," announced Uncle Jim, raising his voice ever so little.

"I knew it," nodded Betty.

"Father, you don't mean —" began Dick.

"Yes, Son. This is the last story that Uncle Jim will be able to tell here in a long, long time. Important business matters call me home, and there is no other way than to go. To-morrow Dick and myself leave on the early train, Betty."

"Oh, Uncle Jim," stammered Betty, her eyes filling with tears. "Don't, please don't! I knew it was too lovely to last, and I've been oh, so hap —"

"Wait, Blue Eyes," admonished Uncle Jim. "There is better news to come, so save those tears for another day. Two days hence, your dear Daddy is coming home. He is in New York now with his ship, and —"

Betty uttered a cry, half laugh and half sob, and threw herself into her mother's arms. In another moment she was laughing and crying on Uncle Jim's shoulder.

"My own Daddy! And you, my darling old Uncle Jim! What a happy girl I ought to be —"

A PRINCE OF JERUSALEM

what a happy girl I am — I'm going to cry again, I'm — " Betty fled from the room, and a few moments later Mrs. Burroughs found the little yellow-haired girl sobbing out her happiness and her sorrow in her own room.

Beloved Uncle Jim and Cousin Dick left for home early on the following morning, and a day later, the big bronzed man whom Betty called "Daddy," and whose voice was as deep and booming as the sea he sailed, stepped into the Burroughs home, and Betty, uttering a shrill cry of delight, was folded tightly in his big, strong arms.

THE END

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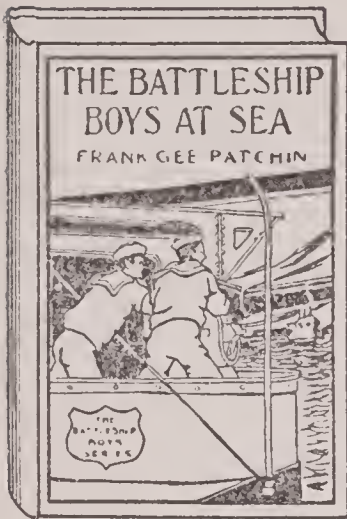
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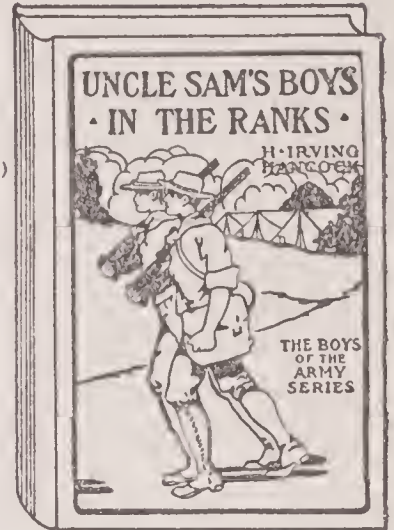
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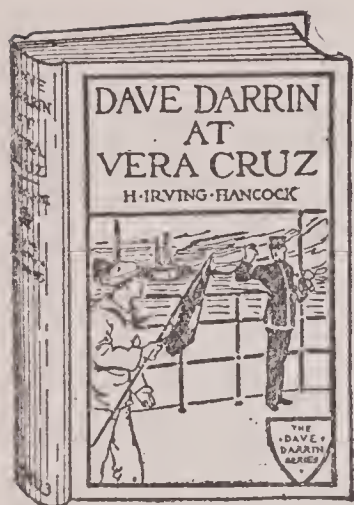


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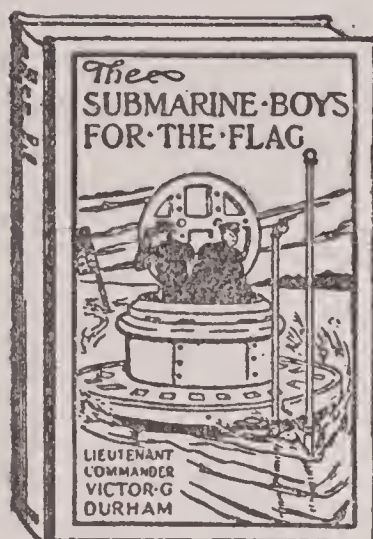


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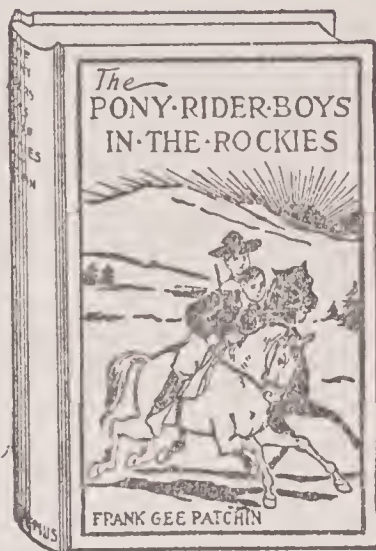
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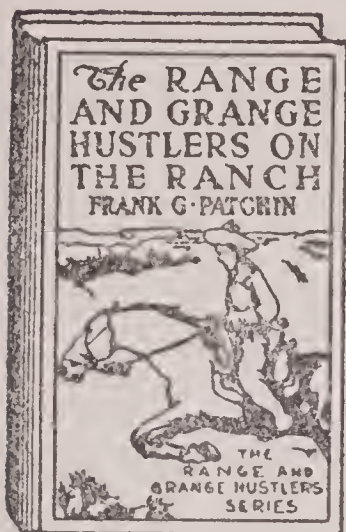


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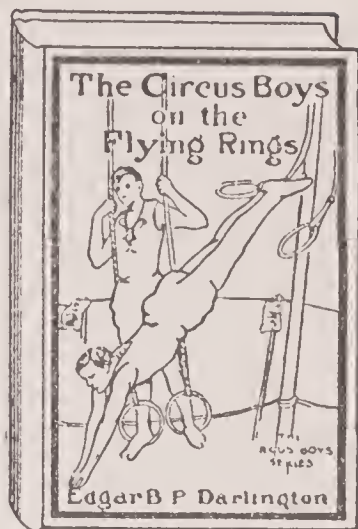
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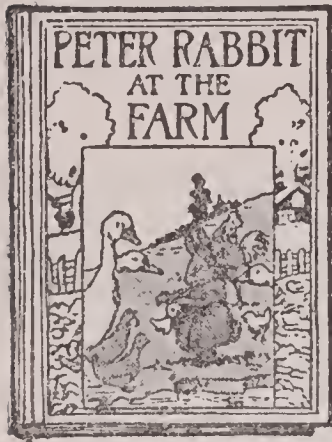
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PRICE, 50c. EACH

WEE FOLKS PETER RABBIT SERIES



1. THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT.
2. HOW PETER RABBIT WENT TO SEA.
3. PETER RABBIT AT THE FARM.
4. PETER RABBIT'S CHRISTMAS.
5. PETER RABBIT'S EASTER.
6. WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOL.
7. PETER RABBIT'S BIRTHDAY.
8. PETER RABBIT GOES A-VISITING.
9. PETER RABBIT AND JACK-THE-JUMPER.
10. PETER RABBIT, JACK-THE-JUMPER AND THE LITTLE BOY.
11. PETER RABBIT, JACK-THE-JUMPER AND LITTLE WHITE RABBIT.
12. PETER RABBIT, JACK-THE-JUMPER AND THE OLD WITCH WOMAN.
13. PETER RABBIT, JACK-THE-JUMPER AND THE TINYBITS.
14. WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT A-FISHING.
15. OLD MOTHER RABBIT AND THE BIG BROWN BEAR.

WEE FOLKS CINDERELLA SERIES

1. THE WONDERFUL STORY OF CINDERELLA.
2. THE STORY OF LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.
3. THE OLDTIME STORY OF THE THREE BEARS.
4. THE OLD, OLD STORY OF POOR COCK ROBIN.
5. CHICKEN LITTLE.
6. PUSS IN BOOTS.
7. THREE LITTLE KITTENS THAT LOST THEIR MITTENS.
8. JACK THE GIANT KILLER.
9. JACK AND THE BEAN-STALK.
10. TOM THUMB.

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1. LITTLE BUNNIE BUNNIEKIN.
2. LITTLE LAMBIE LAMBKIN.
3. LITTLE MOUSIE MOUSIEKIN.
4. LITTLE DEARIE DEER.
5. LITTLE SQUIRRELIE SQUIRRELIEKIN.
6. OLD RED REYNARD THE FOX.

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Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2005

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